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THE WORKS OF JAMES  
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VOL. XI













THE POEMS AND PROSE  
❁ ❁ SKETCHES OF ❁ ❁  
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC  
SIFERS ❁ ❁ AND  
HOME-FOLKS ❁ ❁ ❁

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S  
SONS ❁ NEW YORK ❁ 1902

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# RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

TO  
DR. FRANKLIN W. HAYS  
THE LOYAL CHUM OF MY LATEST YOUTH  
AND LIKE FRIEND AND COMRADE STILL  
WITH ALL GRATEFUL AFFECTION OF  
THE AUTHOR

*WE found him in that Far-away that yet to us seems near—  
We vagrants of but yesterday when idlest youth was here,—  
When lightest song and laziest mirth possessed us through and through,  
And all the dreamy summer-earth seemed drugged with morning dew :*

*When our ambition scarce had shot a stalk or blade indeed :  
Yours,—choked as in the garden-spot you still deferred to “weed” :  
Mine,—but a pipe half-cleared of pith—as now it flats and whines  
In sympathetic cadence with a hiccough in the lines.*

*Ay, even then—O timely hour !—the High Gods did confer  
In our behalf:—And, clothed in power, lo, came their Courier—  
Not winged with flame nor shod with wind,—but ambling down the pike,  
Horseback, with saddle-bags behind, and guise all human-like.*

*And it was given us to see, beneath his rustic rind,  
A native force and mastery of such inspiring kind,  
That half unconsciously we made obeisance.—Smiling, thus  
His soul shone from his eyes and laid its glory over us.*

. . . . .

*Though, faring still that Far-away that yet to us seems near,  
His form, through mists of yesterday, fades from the vision here,  
Forever as he rides, it is in retinue divine,—  
The hearts of all his time are his, with your hale heart and mine.*



RUBÁIYÁT  
OF  
DOC SIFERS

I

EF you don't know DOC SIFERS I'll jes argy, here and  
now,  
You've bin a mighty little while about here, anyhow!  
'Cause Doc he's rid these roads and woods—er *swum*  
'em, now and then—  
And practised in this neighborhood sence hain't no  
tellin' when!

II

In radius o' fifteen mil'd, all p'int's o' compass round,  
No man er woman, chick er child, er team, on top o'  
ground,  
But knows *him*—yes, and got respects and likin' fer  
him, too,  
Fer all his so-to-speak dee-fects o' genius showin'  
through!

## RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

### III

Some claims he's absent-minded; some has said they  
wuz afeard  
To take his powders when he come and dosed 'em out,  
and 'peared  
To have his mind on somepin' else—like County Ditch,  
er some  
New way o' tannin' mussrat-pelts, er makin' butter  
come.

### IV

He's cur'ous—they hain't no mistake about it!—but  
he's got  
Enough o' extry brains to make a *jury*—like as not.  
They's no *describin'* Sifers,—fer, when all is said and  
done,  
He's jes *hisse'f Doc Sifers*—ner they hain't no other one!

### V

Doc's allus sociable, polite, and 'greeable, you'll find—  
Pervidin' ef you strike him right and nothin' on his  
mind,—  
Like in some *hurry*, when they've sent fer Sifers *quick*,  
you see,  
To 'tend some sawmill-accident, er picnic jamboree;

## RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

### VI

Er when the lightnin' 's struck some harebrained  
harvest-hand; er in  
Some 'tempt o' suicidin'—where they'd ort to try ag'in!  
I've *knowed* Doc haul up from a trot and talk a' hour  
er two  
When raily he'd a-ort o' not a-stopped fer "*Howdy-do!*"

### VII

And then, I've met him 'long the road, *a-lop'in'*,—starin'  
straight  
Ahead,—and yit he never knowed me when I hollered  
"*Yate,*  
*Old Saddlebags!*" all hearty-like, er "*Who you goin' to*  
*kill?*"  
And he'd say nothin'—only hike on faster, starin' still!

### VIII

I'd bin insulted, many a time, ef I jes wuzn't shore  
Doc didn't mean a thing. And I'm not tetchy any  
more  
Sence that-air day, ef he'd a-jes a-stopped to jaw with  
*me,*  
They'd bin a little dorter less in my own fambily!

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

IX

Times *now*, at home, when Sifers' name comes up, I jes  
let on,  
You know, 'at I think Doc's to *blame*, the way he's bin  
and gone  
And disapp'inted folks—'Ll-jee-mun-nee! you'd ort to  
then  
Jes hear my wife light into me—"ongratefulest o' men!"

X

'Mongst *all* the women—mild er rough, splendiferous  
er plain,  
Er them *with* sense, er not enough to come in out the  
rain,—  
Jes ever' shape and build and style o' women, fat er  
slim—  
They all like Doc, and got a smile and pleasant word  
fer *him*!

XI

Ner hain't no horse I've ever saw but what'll neigh  
and try  
To sidle up to him, and paw, and sense him, ear-and-eye:



RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

Then jes a tetch o' Doc's old pa'm, to pat 'em, er to  
shove  
Along their nose—and they're as ca'm as any cooin'  
dove!

XII

And same with *dogs*,—take any breed, er strain, er  
pedigree,  
Er racial caste 'at can't concede no use fer you er me,—  
They'll putt all predju-dice aside in *Doc's* case and go in  
Kahoots with him, as satisfied as he wuz kith-and-kin!

XIII

And Doc's a wonder, trainin' pets!—He's got a  
chicken-hawk,  
In kind o' half-cage, where he sets out in the gyarden-  
walk,  
And got that wild bird trained so tame, he'll loose  
him, and he'll fly  
Clean to the woods!—Doc calls his name—and he'll  
come, by and by!

XIV

Some says no money down 'ud buy that bird o' Doc.—  
Ner no  
Inducement to the *bird*, says I, 'at *he'd* let *Sifers* go!

## RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

And Doc *he* say 'at *he's* content—long as a bird o' prey  
Kin 'bide *him*, it's a *compliment*, and takes it thataway.

### XV

But, gittin' back to *docterin'*—all the sick and in  
distress,  
And old and pore, and weak and small, and lone and  
motherless,—  
I jes tell *you* I 'preciate the man 'at's got the love  
To "go ye forth and ministrate!" as Scriptur' tells us of.

### XVI

*Dull* times, Doc jes *mianders* round, in that old rig o'  
his:  
And hain't no tellin' where he's bound ner guessin'  
where he is;  
He'll drive, they tell, jes thataway fer maybe six er eight  
Days at a stretch; and neighbors say he's bin clean  
round the State.

### XVII

He picked a' old tramp up, one trip, 'bout eighty mil'd  
from here,  
And fetched him home and k-yored his hip, and kep'  
him 'bout a year;

## RUBIÁYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

And feller said—in all *his* ja'nts round this terreschul  
ball

'At no man wuz a *circumstance* to *Doc*!—he topped 'em  
all!—

### XVIII

Said, bark o' trees 's a' open book to Doc, and vines and  
moss

He read like writin'—with a look knowed ever' dot and  
cross:

Said, stars at night wuz jes as good's a compass: said,  
he s'pose

You couldn't lose Doc in the woods the darkest night  
that blows!

### XIX

Said, Doc'll tell you, purty clos't, by underbresh and  
plants,

How fur off *warter* is,—and 'most perdict the sort o'  
chance

You'll have o' findin' *fish*; and how they're liable to  
*bite*,

And whether they're a-bitin' now, er only after night.

XX

And, whilse we're talkin' *fish*,—I mind they formed a  
 fishin'-crowd  
 (When folks *could* fish 'thout gittin' *fined*, and seinin'  
 wuz allowed!)

O' leadin' citizens, you know, to go and seine "Old  
 Blue"—

But hadn't no big seine, and so—w'y, what wuz they  
 to do? . . .

XXI

And Doc he say he thought 'at *he* could *knit* a stitch er  
 two—

"Bring the *materials* to me—'at's all I'm astin' you!"

And down he sets—six weeks, i jing! and knits that  
 seine plum done—

Made corks too, brails and ever'thing—good as a  
 boughten one!

XXII

Doc's *public* sperit—when the sick's not takin' *all* his  
 time

And he's got *some* fer politics—is simple yit sublime:—

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

He'll *talk* his *principles*—and they air *honest*;—but the  
sly  
Friend strikes him first, election-day, he'd 'commodate,  
er die!

XXIII

And yit, though Doc, as all men knows, is square  
straight up and down,  
That vote o' his is—well, I s'pose—the cheapest one in  
town;—  
A fact 'at's sad to verify, as could be done on oath—  
I've voted Doc myse'f—*And I was criminal fer both!*

XXIV

You kin corrupt the *ballot-box*—corrupt *yourse'f*, as well—  
Corrupt *some* neighbors,—but old Doc's as oncor-  
ruptible  
As Holy Writ. So putt a pin right there!—Let *Sifers* be,  
I jucks! he wouldn't vote ag'in' his own worst inimy!

XXV

When Cynthy Eubanks laid so low with fever, and Doc  
Glenn  
Told Euby Cynth 'ud haf to go—they sends fer *Sifers*  
then! . . .

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

Doc sized the case: "She's starved," says he, "fer  
    *warter*—yes, and *meat*!  
The treatment 'at she'll git from *me's* all she kin drink  
    and eat!"

XXVI

He orders Euby then to split some wood, and take and  
    build  
A fire in kitchen-stove, and git a young spring-chicken  
    killed;  
And jes whirled in and th'owed his hat and coat there  
    on the bed,  
And warshed his hands and sailed in that-air kitchen,  
    Euby said,

XXVII

And biled that chicken-broth, and got that dinner—all  
    complete  
And clean and crisp and good and hot as mortal ever  
    eat!  
And Cynth and Euby both'll say 'at Doc'll git as  
    good  
Meals-vittles up, jes any day, as any *woman* could!

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

XXVIII

Time Sister Abbick tuk so bad with striffen o' the lung,  
P'tracted Meetin', where she had jes shouted, prayed,  
and sung  
All winter long, through snow and thaw,—when Sifers  
come, says he:  
“No, M'lissy; don't poke out your raw and cloven tongue  
at me!—

XXIX

“I know, without no symptoms but them *injarubber-shoes*  
You promised me to never putt a fool-foot in ner use  
At purril o' your life!” he said. “And I won't save  
you *now*,  
Onless—here on your dyin' bed—you consecrate your  
vow!”

XXX

Without a-claimin' *any creed*, Doc's rail religious views  
Nobody knows—ner got no *need* o' knowin' whilse he  
choose  
To be heerd not of man, ner raise no loud, vainglorious  
prayers  
In crowded marts, er public ways, er—i jucks, *any-*  
wheres!—

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

XXXI

'Less'n it *is* away deep down in his own heart, at night,  
Facin' the storm, when all the town's a-sleepin' snug  
    and tight—  
Him splashin' hence from scenes o' pride and sloth and  
    gilded show,  
To some pore sufferer's bedside o' anguish, don't you  
    know!

XXXII

Er maybe dead o' *winter*—makes no odds to *Doc*,—he's  
    got  
To face the weather ef it takes the hide off! 'cause he'll  
    not  
*Lie* out o' goin' and p'tend he's sick hisse'f—like *some*  
'At I could name 'at folks might send fer and they'd  
    *never* come!

XXXIII

Like pore Phin Hoover—when he goes to that last  
    dance o' his!  
That Chris'mus when his feet wuz froze—and Doc  
    saved all they is



RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

Left of 'em—" 'Nough," as Phin say now, "to *track* me  
by, and be  
A advertisement, anyhow, o' what Doc's done fer me!—

XXXIV

"When *he* come—knife-and-saw"—Phin say, "I  
knowed, ef I'd the spunk,  
'At Doc 'ud fix me up *some* way, ef nothin' but my  
*trunk*  
Wuz left, he'd fasten *casters* in, and have me, spick-  
and-span,  
A-skootin' round the streets ag'in as spry as any man!"

XXXV

Doc sees a patient's *got* to quit—he'll ease him down  
serene  
As dozin' off to sleep, and yit not dope him with mor-  
*pheen*.—  
He won't tell *what*—jes 'lows 'at he has "airnt the  
right to sing  
'O grave, where is thy victory! O death, where is thy  
sting!'"

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

XXXVI

And, mind ye now!—it's not in scoff and scorn, by long  
degree,  
'At Doc gits things like that-un off: it's jes his *shority*  
And total faith in Life to Come,—w'y, "from that *Land*  
*o' Bliss*,"  
He says, "we'll haf to chuckle some, a-lookin' back at  
this!"

XXXVII

And, still in p'int, I mind, one *night o' 'nitiation* at  
Some secert lodge, 'at Doc set right down on 'em,  
square and flat,  
When they mixed up some Scriptur' and wuz *funnin'*-like  
—w'y, he  
Lit in 'em with a rep'imand 'at ripped 'em, A to Z!

XXXVIII

And onc't—when ginerol loafin'-place wuz old Shoe-Shop  
—and all  
The gang 'ud git in there and brace their backs ag'inst  
the wall

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

And *settle* questions that had went unsettled long  
enough,—  
Like “wuz no Heav’n—ner no torment”—*jes talkin’*  
*awful rough!*

XXXIX

There wuz Sloke Haines and old Ike Knight and  
Coonrod Simmes—all three  
Ag’inst the Bible and the Light, and scoutin’ Deity.  
“*Science*,” says Ike, “it *DIMonstrates*—it takes nobody’s  
word—  
*Scriptur’* er not,—it *’vestigates* ef sich things could  
occurred!”

XL

Well, Doc he heerd this,—he’d drapped in a minute,  
fer to git  
A tore-off heel pegged on ag’in,—and, as he stood on it  
And stomped and grinned, he says to Ike, “I s’pose  
now, purty soon  
Some lightnin’-bug, indignant-like, ’ll *’vestigate* the  
moon! . . .

XLI

“No, Ike,” says Doc, “this world hain’t saw no brains  
like yourn and mine

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

With sense enough to grasp a law 'at takes a brain  
divine.—  
I've bared the thoughts of brains in doubt, and felt  
their finest pulse,—  
And mortal brains jes won't turn out omnipotent  
results!"

XLII

And Doc he's got respects to spare the *rich* as well as  
*pore*—  
Says he, "I'd turn no *millionnaire* onsheltered from my  
door."—  
Says he, "What's wealth to him in quest o' *honest*  
friends to back  
And love him fer *hissef*?—not jes because he's made  
his jack!"

XLIII

And childern.—*Childern?* Lawzy-day! Doc *worships*  
'em!—You call  
Round at his house and *ast* 'em!—they're a-*swarmin'*  
there—that's all!—  
They're in his *Lib'ry*—in best room—in kitchen—fur  
and near,—  
In office too, and, I p'sume, his operatin'-cheer!

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

XLIV

You know they's men 'at *bees* won't sting?—They's  
    plaguy *few*,—but Doc  
He's one o' *them*.—And same, i jing! with *childern* ;—  
    they jes flock  
Round Sifers *natchurl* !—in his lap, and in his pockets,  
    too,  
And in his old fur mitts and cap, and *heart* as warm  
    and true!

XLV

It's cur'ous, too,—'cause Doc hain't got no childern of  
    his own—  
'Ceptin' the ones he's tuk and brought up, 'at's bin  
    left alone  
And orphans when their father died, er mother,—and  
    Doc he  
Has he'pped their dyin' satisfied.—“The child shall live  
    with me

XLVI

“And Winniferd, my wife,” he'd say, and stop right  
    there, and cle'r  
His th' oat, and go on thinkin' way *some* mother-hearts  
    down here

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

Can't never feel *their own* babe's face a-pressin' 'em,  
ner make  
Their naked breasts a restin'-place fer any baby's sake.

XLVII

Doc's *Lib'ry*—as he calls it,—well, they's ha'f-a-dozen  
she'ves  
Jam-full o' books—I couldn't tell *how* many—count  
yourse'ves!  
*One whole she'f's* Works on Medicine! and most the  
rest's about  
First Settlement, and Indians in here,—'fore we driv  
'em out.—

XLVIII

And Plutarch's *Lives*—and life also o' Dan'el Boone,  
and this-  
Here Mungo Park, and Adam Poe—jes all the *lives*  
they is!  
And Doc's got all the *novels* out,—by Scott and  
Dickison  
And Cooper.—And, I make no doubt, he's read 'em  
ever' one!

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

XLIX

Onc't, in his office, settin' there, with crowd o' eight er  
nine  
Old neighbors with the time to spare, and Doc a-feelin'  
fine,  
A man rid up from Rollins, jes fer Doc to write him out  
Some blame' p'scription—done, I guess, in minute, nigh  
about.—

L

And *I* says, "Doc, you 'pear so s'pry, jes write me that  
recei't  
You have fer bein' *happy* by,—fer that 'ud shorely beat  
Your *medicine!*" says I.—And quick as *s'cat!* Doc  
turned and writ  
And handed me: "Go he'p the sick, and putt your heart  
in it."

LI

And then, "A-talkin' furder 'bout that line o' thought,"  
says he,  
"Ef we'll jes do the work cut out and give' to you and  
me,

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

We'll lack no joy, ner appetite, ner all we'd ort to eat,  
And sleep like childern ever' night—as puore and ca'm  
and sweet."

LII

Doc *has* bin 'cused o' *offishness* and lack o' talkin' free  
And extry friendly; but he says, "I 'm 'feard o' talk,"  
says he,—  
"I've got," he says, "a natchurl turn fer talkin' fit to  
kill.—  
The best and hardest thing to learn is trick o' keepin'  
still."

LIII

Doc *kin* smoke, and I s'pose he *might* drink licker—jes  
fer fun.  
He says, "*You* smoke, *you* drink all right; but *I* don't—  
neether one"—  
Says, "I *like* whiskey—'good old rye'—but like it in  
its place,  
Like that-air warter in your eye, er nose there on your  
face."

LIV

Doc's bound to have his joke! The day he got that off  
on me  
I jes had sold a load o' hay at "Scofield's Livery,"



RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

And tolled Doc in the shed they kep' the hears't in,  
where I'd hid  
The stuff 'at got me "out o' step," as Sifers said it did.

LV

Doc hain't, to say, no "*rollin' stone*," and yit he hain't  
no hand  
Fer '*cumulatin'*.—*Home's* his own, and scrap o' farmin'-  
land—  
Enough to keep him out the way when folks is tuk  
down sick  
The suddentest—'most any day they want him 'special  
quick.

LVI

And yit Doc loves his practice; ner don't, wilful, want  
to slight  
No call—no matter who—how fur away—er day er  
night.—  
He loves his work—he loves his friends—June, Winter,  
Fall, and Spring:  
His *lovin'*—facts is—never ends; he loves jes *ever'*-  
thing. . . .

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

LVII

'Cept—*keepin'* books. He never sets down no accounts.  
—He hates,  
The worst of all, collectin' debts—the worst, the more  
he waits.—  
I've knowed him, when at last he *had* to dun a man, to  
end  
By makin' him a loan—and mad he hadn't more to  
lend.

LVIII

When Pence's Drug Store ust to be in full blast, they  
wuz some  
Doc's patients got things frekantly there, charged to  
*him*, i gum!—  
Doc run a bill there, don't you know, and allus when he  
squared,  
He never questioned nothin',—so he had his feelin's  
spared.

LIX

Now sich as that, I hold and claim, hain't '*scusable*—it's  
not  
*Perfessional*!—It's jes a shame 'at Doc hisse'f hain't  
got

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

No better *business-sense*! That's why lots 'd respect  
him more,  
And not give him the clean go-by fer *other* doctors.  
Shore!

LX

This-here Doc *Glenn*, fer instance; er this little jack-leg  
*Hall*;—  
They're *business*—folks respects 'em fer their *business*  
more'n all  
They ever knowed, er ever *will*, 'bout *medicine*.—Yit  
they  
Collect their money, k-yore er kill.—They're *business*,  
anyway!

LXI

You ast Jake Dunn;—he's worked it out in *figgers*.—  
He kin show  
*Statistics* how Doc's airnt about *three* fortunes in a  
row,—  
Ever' ten-year' hand-runnin' straight—*three* of 'em—  
*thirty* year'  
'At Jake kin count and 'lucidate o' Sifers' practice  
here.

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

LXII

Yit—"Praise the Lord," says Doc, "we've got our  
little home!" says he—  
"(It's raily *Winniferd's*, but what she owns, she sheers  
with me.)  
We' got our little gyarden-spot, and peach- and apple-  
trees,  
And stable, too, and chicken-lot, and eighteen hive' o'  
bees."

LXIII

*You* call it anything you please, but it's *witchcraft*—the  
power  
'At Sifers has o' handlin' bees!—He'll watch 'em by the  
hour—  
Mix right amongst 'em, mad and hot and swarmin'!—  
yit they won't  
Sting *him*, er *want* to—'pear to not,—at least I know  
they *don't*.

LXIV

With *me* and bees they's no *p'tence* o' socialbility—  
A dad-burn bee 'ud climb a fence to git a whack at *me*!  
I s'pose no thing 'at's *got* a sting is raily satisfied  
It's *sharp* enough, ontel, i jing! he's honed it on my  
hide!

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

LXV

And Doc he's allus had a knack *inventin'* things.—

Dee-vised

A windlass wound its own se'f back as it run down: and  
s'prised

Their new hired girl with *clothes-line*, too, and *clothes-*  
*pins*, all in *one* :

Purt'-nigh all left fer *her* to do wuz git her *primpin'*  
done!

LXVI

And onc't, I mind, in airy Spring, and tappin' sugar-  
trees,

Doc made a dad-burn little thing to sharpen *spiles* with  
—these-

Here wood'-spouts 'at the peth's punched out, and driv'  
in where they bore

The auger-holes. He sharpened 'bout *a million* spiles er  
more!

LXVII

And Doc's the first man ever swung a *bucket* on a tree  
Instid o' *troughs* ; and first man brung *grained* sugar—  
so's 'at he

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

Could use it fer his coffee, and fer cookin', don't you  
know.—

Folks come clean up from Pleasantland 'fore they'd  
*believe* it, though!

LXVIII

And all Doc's stable-doors *on*locks and locks *theirse'ves*  
—and gates

The same way;—all rigged up like clocks, with pulleys,  
wheels, and weights,—

So, 's Doc says, “drivin' *out*, er *in*, they'll *open*; and  
they'll *then*,

All quiet-like, shet up ag'in like little gentlemen!”

LXIX

And Doc 'ud made a mighty good *detective*.—Neighbors  
all

Will testify to *that*—er *could*, ef they wuz legal call:

His theories on any crime is worth your listenin' to.—

And he has hit 'em, many a time, long 'fore established  
true.

LXX

At this young druggist Wenfield Pence's trial fer his  
life,

On *primy faishy* evidence o' pizonin' his wife,

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

*Doc's* testimony saved and cle'red and 'quitted him and  
freed

Him so's he never even 'peared cog-nizant of the deed!

LXXI

The facts wuz—Sifers testified,—at inquest he had  
found

The stummick showed the woman *died* o' pizon, but had  
downed

The dos't *herse'f*,—because *amount* and *cost* o' drug  
imployed

No *druggist* would, on *no* account, a-lavished and  
distroyed!

LXXII

Doc tracked a blame-don burgler down, and *nailed* the  
scamp, to boot,

But told him ef he'd leave the town he wouldn't  
prosecute.

He traced him by a tied-up thumb-print in fresh putty,  
where

Doc glazed it. Jes *that's* how he come to track him  
to his lair!

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

LXXIII

Doc's jes a *leetle* too inclined, *some* thinks, to overlook  
The criminal and vicious kind we'd ort to bring to book  
And punish, 'thout no extry show o' *sympathizin'*, where  
*They* hain't showed none fer *us*, you know. But he  
takes issue there:

LXXIV

Doc argies 'at "The Red-eyed Law," as *he* says, "ort to  
learn  
To lay a mighty leenient paw on deeds o' sich concern  
As only the Good Bein' knows the wherefore of, and  
spreads  
His hands above accused and sows His mercies on their  
heads."

LXXV

Doc even holds 'at *murder* hain't no crime we got a  
right  
To *hang* a man fer—claims it's *taint* o' *lunacy*, er *quite*.—  
"Hold *sich* a man responsibul fer murder," Doc says,—  
"then,  
When *he's* hung, where's the rope to pull them *sound-*  
*mind* jurymen?"



RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

LXXVI

“It’s in a nutshell—*all* kin see,” says Doc,—“it’s cle’r  
the *Law’s*

As ap’ to err as you er me, and kill without a cause:

The man most innocent o’ sin *I’ve* saw, er *’spect* to  
see,

Wuz servin’ a life-sentence in the penitentchury.”

LXXVII

And Doc’s a whole hand at a *fire!*—directin’ how and  
where

To set your ladders, low er higher, and what first duties  
air,—

Like formin’ warter-bucket-line; and best man in the  
town

To chop holes in old roofs, and mine defective chimblies  
down:

LXXVIII

Er durin’ any public crowd, mass-meetin’, er big day,

Where ladies ortn’t be allowed, as I’ve heerd Sifers  
say,—

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

When they's a suddent rush somewhere, it's Doc's  
voice, ca'm and cle'r,  
Says, "Fall back, men, and give her air!—that's all  
she's faintin' fer."

LXXIX

The sorriest I ever feel fer Doc is when some show  
Er circus comes to town and he'll not git a chance to go.  
'Cause he jes natchurly *delights* in circuses—clean down  
From tumblers, in their spangled tights, to trick-mule  
and Old Clown.

LXXX

And ever'body *knows* it, too, how Doc is, thataway! . . .  
I mind a circus onc't come through—wuz there myse'f  
that day.—  
Ring-master cracked his whip, you know, to start the  
ridin'—when  
In runs Old Clown and hollers "*Whoa!*—Ladies and  
gentlemen

LXXXI

"Of this vast audience, I fain would make inquiry cle'r,  
And learn, find out, and ascertain—*Is Doctor Sifers*  
*here?*"

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

And when some fool-voice bellers down: "He is! He's  
settin' in  
Full view o' ye!" "Then," says the Clown, "*the circus  
may begin!*"

LXXXII

Doc's got a *temper*; but, he says, he's learnt it which  
is boss,  
Yit has to *watch* it, more er less. . . . I never seen  
him cross  
But onc't, enough to make him swear;—milch-cow  
stepped on his toe,  
And Doc ripped out "*I doggies!*"—There's the only  
case I know.

LXXXIII

Doc says that's what your temper's fer—to hold back  
out o' view,  
And learn it never to occur on out ahead o' *you*.—  
"*You lead the way,*" says Sifers—"git your *temper*  
back in line—  
And *furdest* back the *best*, ef it 's as mean a one as  
mine!"

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

LXXXIV

He hates contentions—can't abide a wrangle er dispute  
O' any kind; and he 'ull slide out of a crowd and skoot  
Up some back-alley 'fore he'll stand and listen to a  
furse  
When ary one's got upper-hand and t'other one's got  
worse.

LXXXV

Doc says: "I 'spise, when pore and weak and awk'ard  
talkers fails,  
To see it's them with hardest cheek and loudest mouth  
prevails.—  
A' all-one-sided quarr'l 'll make me *biassed*, mighty  
near,—  
'Cause ginerly the side I take's the one I never hear."

LXXXVI

What 'peals to Doc the most and best is "seein' folks  
*agreed*,  
And takin' ekal interest and universal heed  
O' ever'body *else's* words and idies—same as we  
Wuz glad and chirpy as the birds—jes as we'd *ort* to  
be!"

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

LXXXVII

And *paterotic*! Like to git Doc started, full and fair,  
About the war, and why 't'uz fit, and what wuz  
    'complished there;  
"And who wuz *wrong*," says Doc, "er *right*, 't'uz waste  
    o' blood and tears,  
All prophesied in *Black* and *White* fer years and years  
    and years!"

LXXXVIII

And then he'll likely kind o' tetch on old John Brown,  
    and dwell  
On what *his* warnin's wuz; and ketch his breath and  
    cough, and tell  
On down to Lincoln's death. And *then*—well, he jes  
    chokes and quits  
With "I must go now, gentlemen!" and grabs his hat,  
    and *gits*!

LXXXIX

Doc's own war-rickord wuzn't won so much in line o'  
    fight  
As line o' work and nussin' done the wounded, day and  
    night.—

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

His wuz the hand, through dark and dawn, 'at bound  
their wownds, and laid  
As soft as their own mother's on their forreds when  
they prayed. . . .

XC

His wuz the face they saw the first—all dim, but smilin'  
bright,  
As they come to and knowed the worst, yit saw the old  
*Red-White-*  
*And-Blue* where Doc had fixed it where they'd see it  
*wavin'* still,  
Out through the open tent-flap there, er 'crost the  
winder-sill.

XCI

And some's a-limpin' round here yit—a-waitin' Last  
Review,—  
'Ud give the pensions 'at they git, and pawn their  
crutches, too,  
To he'p Doc out, ef he wuz pressed financial'—same  
as he  
Has *allus* he'pped them when distressed—ner never  
tuk a fee.

XCH

Doc never wuz much hand to pay attention to *p'tence*  
And fuss-and-feathers and display in men o' promi-  
nence:

"A raily *great* man," Sifers 'lows, "is not the out'ard  
dressed—

All uniform, salutes and bows, and swellin' out his  
chest.

XCIII

"I *met* a great man onc't," Doc says, "and shuk his  
hand," says he,

"And *he* come 'bout in *one*, I guess, o' disapp'intin'  
*me*—

He talked so common-like, and brought his mind so  
cle'r in view

And simple-like, I purt'-nigh thought, '*I'm* best man  
o' the two!'"

XCIV

Yes-*sir*! Doc's got convictions and old-fashioned  
kind o' ways

And idies 'bout this glorious Land o' Freedom; and  
he'll raise

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

His hat clean off, no matter where, jes ever' time he  
sees  
The Stars and Stripes a-floatin' there and flappin' in  
the breeze.

XCV

And tunes like old "Red-White-and-Blue" 'll fairly  
drive him wild,  
Played on the brass band, marchin' through the  
streets! Jes like a child  
I've saw that man, his smile jes set, all kind o' pale and  
white,  
Bareheaded, and his eyes all wet, yit dancin' with  
delight!

XCVI

And yit, that very man we see all trimbly, pale, and  
wann,  
Give him a case o' *surgery*, we'll see another man!—  
*We'll* do the trimblin' then, and *we'll* git white around  
the gills—  
He'll show us *nerve* o' nerves, and he 'ull show us *skill*  
o' skills!



RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

XCVII

*Then* you could toot your horns and beat your drums  
and bang your guns,  
And wave your flags and march the street, and charge,  
all Freedom's sons!—  
And Sifers *then*, I bet my hat, 'ud never flinch a hair,  
But, stiddy-handed, 'tend to that pore patient layin'  
there.

XCVIII

And Sifers' *eye's* as stiddy as that hand o' his!—He'll  
shoot  
A' old-style rifle, like he has, and smallest bore, to boot,  
With any fancy rifles made to-day, er expert shot  
'At works at shootin' like a *trade*—and all *some* of  
'em's got!

XCIX

Let 'em go right out in the *woods* with Doc, and leave  
their "traps"  
And blame' glass-balls and queensware-goods, and see  
how Sifers draps  
A squirrel out the tallest tree.—And 'fore he fires he'll  
say  
Jes where he'll hit him—yes, sir-ee! And he's hit  
thataway!

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

C

Let 'em go out with him, i jucks! with fishin'-pole and  
gun,—  
And ekal chances, fish and ducks, and take the *rain*, er  
*sun*,  
Jes as it pours, er as it blinds the eyesight; *then* I  
guess  
'At they'd acknowledge, in their minds, their disadvan-  
tages.

CI

And yit *he'd* be the last man out to flop his wings and  
crow  
Insultin'-like, and strut about above his fallen foe!—  
No-*sir*! the hand 'at tuk the wind out o' their sails  
'ud be  
The very first they grabbed, and grinned to feel sich  
sympathy.

CII

Doc gits off now and then and takes a huntin'-trip  
somewhere  
'Bout Kankakee, up 'mongst the lakes—sometimes'll  
drift round there

## RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

In his canoe a week er two; then paddle clean on  
back  
By way o' old Wabash and Blue, with fish—all he kin  
pack,—

### CIII

And wild ducks—some with feathers on 'em yit, and  
stuffed with grass.  
And neighbors—all knows he's bin *gone*—comes round  
and gits a bass—  
A great big double-breasted “rock,” er “black,” er  
maybe *pair*  
Half fills a' ordinary crock. . . . Doc's *fish'll* give out  
there

### CIV

Long 'fore his *ducks*!—But folks'll smile and blandish  
him, and make  
Him tell and *tell* things!—all the while enjoy 'em jes  
fer sake  
O' pleasin' *him*; and then turn in and la'nch him from  
the start  
A-tellin' all the things ag'in they railly know by  
heart.

RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS

CV

He's jes a *child*, 's what Sifers is! And-sir, I'd ruther  
see

That happy, childish face o' his, and puore simplicity,  
Than any shape er style er plan o' mortals otherwise—  
With perfect faith in God and man a-shinin' in his eyes.

TAMÁM.

## HOME-FOLKS

TO  
MYRON W. REED



. . . In this business I knew that I had the world, the planets, and the myriad stars for my companions, and we were all journeying along together, fulfilling the same divine order.

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

## PROEM

*You Home-Folks :—Aid your grateful guest—  
Bear with his pondering, wandering ways :  
When idlest he is busiest,  
Being a dreamer of the days.*

*Humor his silent, absent moods—  
His restless quests along the shores  
Of the old creek, wound through the woods,  
The haws, papaws, and sycamores :*

*The side-path home—the back-way past  
The old pump and the dipper there ;  
The afternoon of dreamy June—  
The old porch, and the rocking-chair.*

*Yea, bear with him a little space—  
His heart must smoulder on awhile  
Ere yet it flames out in his face  
A wholly tearless smile.*





## HOME-FOLKS

HOME-FOLKS!—Well, that-air name, to me,  
Sounds jis the same as *poetry*—  
That is, ef poetry is jis  
As sweet as I've hearn tell it is!

Home-Folks—they're jis the same as *kin*—  
All brung up, same as *we* have bin,  
Without no overpowerin' sense  
Of their oncommon consequence!

They've bin to school, but not to git  
The habit fastened on 'em yit  
So as to ever interfere  
With *other* work 'at's waitin' here:

Home-Folks has crops to plant and plow,  
Er lives in town and keeps a cow;  
But whether country-jakes er town-,  
They know when eggs is up er down!

## HOME-FOLKS

La! can't you *spot* 'em—when you meet  
'Em *anywheres*—in field er street?  
And can't you see their faces, bright  
As circus-day, heave into sight?

And can't you hear their "Howdy!" clear  
As a brook's chuckle to the ear,  
And allus find their laughin' eyes  
As fresh and clear as morning skies?

And can't you—when they've gone away—  
Jis feel 'em shakin' hands, all day?  
And feel, too, you've bin higher raised  
By sich a meetin'?—God be praised!

Oh, Home-Folks! you're the best of all  
'At ranges this terreschul ball,—  
But, north er south, er east er west,  
It's home is where you're at your best.—

It's home—it's home your faces shine,  
In-nunder your own fig and vine—  
Your fambly and your neighbors 'bout  
Ye, and the latch-string hangin' out.

## HOME-FOLKS

. . . . .  
Home-Folks—*at home*,—I know o' one  
Old feller now 'at hain't got none.—  
Invite him—he may hold back some—  
But *you* invite him, and he'll come. ,

## THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

1898

### I

OLD GLORY! say, who,  
By the ships and the crew,  
And the long, blended ranks of the gray and the  
blue,—  
Who gave you, Old Glory, the name that you bear  
With such pride everywhere  
As you cast yourself free to the rapturous air  
And leap out full-length, as we're wanting you to?—  
Who gave you that name, with the ring of the same,  
And the honor and fame so becoming to you?—  
Your stripes stroked in ripples of white and of red,  
With your stars at their glittering best overhead—  
By day or by night  
Their delightfulest light

## THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

Laughing down from their little square heaven of  
blue!—

Who gave you the name of Old Glory?—say, who—  
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

*The old banner lifted, and faltering then  
In vague lisps and whispers fell silent again.*

## II

Old Glory,—speak out!—we are asking about  
How you happened to “favor” a name, so to say,  
That sounds so familiar and careless and gay  
As we cheer it and shout in our wild breezy way—  
We—the *crowd*, every man of us, calling you that—  
We—Tom, Dick, and Harry—each swinging his hat  
And hurrahing “Old Glory!” like you were our kin,  
When—*Lord!*—we all know we’re as common as sin!  
And yet it just seems like you *humor* us all  
And waft us your thanks, as we hail you and fall  
Into line, with you over us, waving us on  
Where our glorified, sanctified betters have gone.—  
And this is the reason we’re wanting to know—  
(And we’re wanting it *so!*—  
Where our own fathers went we are willing to go.)—

## THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

Who gave you the name of Old Glory—O-ho!—  
Who gave you the name of Old Glory?

*The old flag unfurled with a billowy thrill*  
*For an instant, then wistfully sighed and was still.*

### III

Old Glory: the story we're wanting to hear  
Is what the plain facts of your christening were,—  
For your name—just to hear it,  
Repeat it, and cheer it, 's a tang to the spirit  
As salt as a tear;—  
And seeing you fly, and the boys marching by,  
There's a shout in the throat and a blur in the eye  
And an aching to live for you always—or die,  
If, dying, we still keep you waving on high.  
And so, by our love  
For you, floating above,  
And the scars of all wars and the sorrows thereof,  
Who gave you the name of Old Glory, and why  
Are we thrilled at the name of Old Glory?

*Then the old banner leaped, like a sail in the blast,*  
*And fluttered an audible answer at last.—*

## THE NAME OF OLD GLORY

### IV

And it spake, with a shake of the voice, and it said:—  
By the driven snow-white and the living blood-red  
Of my bars, and their heaven of stars overhead—  
By the symbol conjoined of them all, skyward cast,  
As I float from the steeple, or flap at the mast,  
Or droop o'er the sod where the long grasses nod,—  
My name is as old as the glory of God.

. . . So I came by the name of Old Glory.

## MISTER HOP-TOAD

HOWDY, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out!  
Bin a month o' Sund'ys sence I seen you hereabout.  
Kind o' bin a-layin' in, from the frost and snow?  
Good to see you out ag'in, it's bin so long ago!  
Plow's like slicin' cheese, and sod's loppin' over  
    even;  
Loam's like gingerbread, and clods's softer'n de-  
    ceivin'—  
Mister Hop-Toad, honest-true—Springtime—don't you  
    love it?  
You old rusty rascal you, at the bottom of it!

Oh! oh! oh!  
I grabs up my old hoe;  
But I sees *you*,  
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!  
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"



MISTER HOP-TOAD

Make yourse'f more comfo'bler—square 'round at your  
ease—

Don't set saggin' slanchwise, with your nose below your  
knees.

Swell that fat old throat o' yourn and lemme see you  
swaller;

Straighten up and h'ist your head!— *You* don't owe a  
dollar!—

Hain't no mor'gage on your land—ner no taxes, nuther;  
*You* don't haf to work no roads, even ef you'd ruther.

'F I was you, and *fixed* like you, I railly wouldn't keer  
To swop fer life and hop right in the presidential cheer!

Oh! oh! oh!

I hauls back my old hoe;

But I sees *you*,

And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

'Long about next Aprile, hoppin' down the furry,  
Won't you mind I ast you what 'peared to be the  
hurry?—

Won't you mind I hooked my hoe and hauled you back  
and smiled?—

W'y, bless you, Mister Hop-Toad, I love you like a  
child!

MISTER HOP-TOAD

S'pose I'd want to 'flict you any more'n what you air?—  
S'pose I think you got no rights 'cept the warts you  
wear?

Hulk, sulk, and blink away, you old bloat-eyed rowdy!—  
Hain't you got a word to say?—Won't you tell me  
“Howdy”?

Oh! oh! oh!

I swish round my old hoe;

But I sees *you*,

And s' I, “Ooh-ooh!

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!”

## OUR BOYHOOD HAUNTS

Ho! I'm going back to where  
We were youngsters.—Meet me there,  
Dear old barefoot chum, and we  
Will be as we used to be,—  
Lawless rangers up and down  
The old creek beyond the town—  
Little sunburnt gods at play,  
Just as in that far-away:—  
Water nymphs, all unafraid,  
Shall smile at us from the brink  
Of the old mill-race and wade  
Tow'rd us as we kneeling drink  
At the spring our boyhood knew,  
Pure and clear as morning-dew:  
And, as we are rising there,  
Doubly dow'r'd to hear and see,  
We shall thus be made aware  
Of an eerie piping, heard

## OUR BOYHOOD HAUNTS

High above the happy bird  
In the hazel: And then we,  
Just across the creek, shall see  
(Hah! the goaty rascal!) Pan  
Hoof it o'er the sloping green,  
Mad with his own melody,  
Ay, and (bless the beastly man!)  
Stamping from the grassy soil  
Bruisèd scents of *fleur-de-lis*,  
Boneset, mint, and pennyroyal.

## THE HOME-VOYAGE

GENERAL HENRY W. LAWTON—FELL AT SAN  
MATEO, DECEMBER 19, 1899. IN STATE,  
INDIANAPOLIS, FEBRUARY 6, 1900

BEAR with us, O Great Captain, if our pride  
Show equal measure with our grief's excess  
In greeting you in this your helplessness  
To countermand our vanity or hide  
Your stern displeasure that we thus had tried  
To praise you, knowing praise was your distress:  
But this home-coming swells our hearts no less—  
Because for love of home you proudly died.  
Lo! then, the cable, fathoms 'neath the keel  
That shapes your course, is eloquent of you;  
The old flag, too, at half-mast overhead—  
We doubt not that its gale-kissed ripples feel  
A prouder sense of red and white and blue,—  
The stars—Ah, God, were *they* interpreted!

## THE HOME-VOYAGE

In strange lands were your latest honors won—  
In strange wilds, with strange dangers all beset;  
With rain, like tears, the face of day was wet,  
As rang the ambushed foeman's fateful gun:  
And as you felt your final duty done,  
We feel *that* glory thrills your spirit yet,—  
When at the front, in swiftest death, you met  
The patriot's doom and best reward in one.  
And so the tumult of that island war,  
At last, for you, is stilled forevermore—  
Its scenes of blood blend white as ocean foam  
On your rapt vision as you sight afar  
The sails of peace, and from that alien shore  
The proud ship bears you on your voyage home.

Or rough or smooth the wave, or lowering day  
Or starlit sky—you hold, by native right,  
Your high tranquillity—the silent might  
Of the true hero—so you led the way  
To victory through stormiest battle-fray,  
Because your followers, high above the fight,  
Heard your soul's lightest whisper bid them smite  
For God and man and space to kneel and pray.  
And thus you cross the seas unto your own

## THE HOME-VOYAGE

Beloved land, convoyed with honors meet,  
Saluted as your home's first heritage—  
Nor salutation from your State alone,  
But *all* the States, gathered in mighty fleet,  
Dip colors as you move to anchorage.

## UNCLE SIDNEY'S LOGIC

PA wunst he scold' an' says to me,—

“Don't *play* so much, but try  
To *study* more, and nen you'll be  
A great man, by an' by.”

Nen Uncle Sidney says, “You let

Him *be* a boy an' play.—

The greatest man on earth, I bet,

'Ud trade with him to-day!”



## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

*AS CREATED*

*There's a space for good to bloom in  
Every heart of man or woman,—  
And however wild or human,*

*Or however brimmed with gall.  
Never heart may beat without it;  
And the darkest heart to doubt it  
Has something good about it*

*After all.*

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

*Scene—Hoosier R. R. station, Washout Glen.*

*Night—Interior of Telegraph Office—Single operator's table in some disorder—lunch-basket, litter of books and sheet-music—a flute and a guitar—Rather good-looking young man, evidently in charge, talking to commercial traveler.*

JUNCTION-Station—Pilot Knob—  
Say "the operator there  
Is a *girl*—with auburn hair  
And blue eyes, and purty, too,  
As they make 'em!"—That'll do!—  
They *all* know her 'long the Line—  
Railroad men, from President  
Of the road to section-hand!—  
And she knows *us*—the whole mob  
Of us *lightnin'-slingers*—Shoo!—  
*Brownie's* got us all down fine!  
Though she's *business*, understand,  
Brownie she just beats the band!

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Brownie she's held up that job  
Five or six years anyhow—  
Since her *father's* death, when all  
The whole road decided now  
Was no time for nothin' small,—  
It was *Brownie's* job! Since ten  
Years of age she'd been with *him*  
In the office. Now, I guess,  
She was sixteen, more or less—  
Just a girl, but strong and trim,  
And as independent, too,  
And *reliable* clean through  
As the old man when he died  
Two mile' up the track beside  
His red-light, one icy night  
When the line broke down—and yet  
He got there in time, you bet,  
To shut off a wreck all right!  
Yes, *some* life here, and romance—  
Pilot Knob, though, and Roachdale,  
And this little eight-by-ten  
Dinky town of Washout Glen  
Have to pool inhabitants  
Even for enough young men  
To fill out a country dance,—

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

All chip in on some joint-date,  
And whack up and pony down  
And *combine* and celebrate,—  
Say, on Decoration Day—  
Fourth o' July—Easter, or  
Circus-Day, or *Christmas*, say—  
All *three* towns, and right-o'-way  
For two extrys,—one from here—  
One down from the Knob. Well, then  
Roachdale is herself again!  
Like *last* Christmas, when all three  
Towns colloqued, and far and near  
Billed things for a Christmas-Tree  
At old Roachdale. Now mark here:—  
I had leave, last Holidays,  
And was goin' home, you see,  
Two weeks—and the Company  
Sent a man to fill my place—  
An old *chum* of mine, in fact,  
I'd been coaxin' to arrange  
Just to have his dressin'-case  
And his latest music packed  
And come on here for a change.  
He'd been here to visit me  
Once before—in *summer then*,—

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Come to stay "just two or three  
Days," he said—and he stayed *ten*.  
When he left here *then*—Well, he  
Was clean gone on Brownie—wild  
And plum silly as a child!  
Name—MacClintock. Most young men  
Stood 'way back when Mac was round.  
Fact is, he was *fine*, you know—  
Silver-tenor voice that went  
Up among the stars, and sent  
The girls back to higher-tone'  
Dreams than they had ever known!  
A good-looker—stylish—slim—  
And wore clothes that no man downed—  
Yes, and smoked a good cigar  
And smelt right; and used to blow  
A smooth flute—And a *guitar*  
No man heard till he heard *him*!—  
Say, some midnight serenade—  
*Oomh*! how drippin'-sweet he played!  
*Boys*, though, wasn't stuck on Mac  
So blame' much,—especially  
*Roachdale* operator.—He  
Kind o' had the inside-track  
On *all* of us, as to who

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Got most talk from Brownie, when  
She had nothin' else to do  
But to buzz us now and then  
Up and down the wires, you know;  
And we'd jolly back again  
'Bout some dance—and "Would she go  
With *us* or her *Roachdale* beau?"  
(Boys all called him "Roachy"—see?)—  
Wire her, "Was she 'Happy now'?"  
And "How's 'Roachy,' anyhow?"  
Or, "Say, Brownie, who's the jay  
You was stringin' yesterday?"  
And I've sat here when this key  
Shot me like a battery,  
Just 'cause Brownie wired to say  
That "That box o' fruit, or flowers,  
That 'I'd' sent her came O K,—  
To beguile the weary hours  
Till we met again!"—Then break  
Short off—for the *Roachdale* cuss  
Callin' her, and onto us.  
'Course *he'd* sent 'em—no mistake!  
*Lord, she kept that man awake!*  
Yet he kept *her* fooled: His cheek  
And pure goody-goody gall

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Hid from *her*—if not from all—  
A quite vivid "*yellow streak*."—  
Awful' jealous, don't you see?—  
Felt he had a *right* to be,  
Maybe, bein' *engaged*.—And they  
*Were* engaged—that's straight.—"G A!"\*—  
Well: MacClintock when *he* come  
Down from York to take this job,  
*And stopped off at Pilot Knob*  
*For "instructions,"* there was some  
Indications of unrest  
At *Roachdale* right from the start,—  
"Roachy" wasn't *awful*' smart,  
Maybe, but he done his best—  
With such brains as he possessed.—  
Anyway he made *one* play  
That was brilliant—of its kind—  
And *maintained* it.—From the day  
That MacClintock took my key  
And I left on No. 3,  
"Roachy" opened up on Mac  
And just *loved* him!—purred and whined  
'Cross the wires how tickled he  
Was to hear that *Mac* was back,

\* Telegraphers' abbreviation for "*Go ahead*."



CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

And how glad the *girls* would be  
And the young-folks everywhere,  
As he'd reason to believe,—  
And how, even *then*, they were  
“Shapin’ things at old Roachdale  
For a blow-out, Christmas-eve,  
That would turn all others pale!—  
First a *Christmas-Tree*, at old  
Armory Hall, and then the floor  
Cleared, and—”

“Come in out the cold!”  
Breaks MacClintock—“Don’t I know?—  
Dancin’, say, from ten till four—  
Maybe *daylight* ’fore we go!—  
With Ben Custer’s Band to pour  
Music out in swirlin’ rills  
And back-tides o’ waltz-quadrilles  
Level with the window-sills!—  
Roachy, you’re a *bird*!—But, say,—  
How am I to get away  
From the office here?”

Well, then  
“Roachy” wires him back again:—  
“That’s O K,—I call a *man*  
Up from *Dunkirk*; got it all

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Fixed.—So Christmas-eve, you can  
Collar the seven-thirty train  
For Roachdale—the same that *he*  
Comes on.—Leave your office-key  
In the door: he'll do the rest.”  
Then “old Roachy” rattled through  
A long list of who'd be there,—  
Boys and girls that Mac knew best—  
*One* name, though, that had no bare  
Little mention anywhere!  
Then he shut off, as he said,  
For his supper . . . About ten  
Minutes *Mac* was *called again*—  
With a click that flushed him red  
As the signal-flag—and then  
Came like music in the air—  
“Yes, and *Brownie* will be there!”

---

Folks tell *me*, that Christmas-Tree,  
Dance and whole blame' jamboree,  
Looked like it was goin' to be  
A blood-curdlin' tragedy.  
People 'long the *roads*, you know—

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Well, they've had experience  
With all sorts of *accidents*,  
And they've learnt *some* things,—and so  
When an accident or wreck  
Happens, they know *some man's "break"*  
Is responsible, and hence—  
Well—they want to *break* his *neck*!  
So it happened, Christmas-eve,  
At *Roachdale*,—MacClintock there  
Cocked back in the barber-chair  
At eight-forty, and no train  
Down yet from the Knob, and it  
Due at eight-ten sharp. The strain  
Was a-showin' quite a bit  
On the general crowd; and when  
Purty soon the rumor spread—  
*Wreck* had probably occurred—  
Some one said somebody said  
That he'd heard somebody say,  
“*Operator* at the *Glen*  
Was to blame for the delay—  
Fact is, he had run away  
From his office—Even then  
Was in *Roachdale*—there to be  
Present at the Christmas-Tree

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

And the 'shindig' afterward,  
Wreck or *no* wreck!" . . . *Mac* sat up,  
Whiter than the shavin'-cup. . . .  
Back of *his* face in the glass  
He stared into he could see  
A big crowd there—and, alas!  
Not in all that threatening throng  
One friend's face of sympathy—  
One friend knowin' right from wrong!  
He got on his feet—erect—  
Nervy;—faced the crowd, and then  
Said: "*I* am MacClintock from  
The Glen-office, and I've come  
To your Christmas festival  
By request of one that all  
Of you honor, gentlemen,—  
Your most trusted citizen—  
Your own operator here  
At the station-office—where  
He'll acquit *me* of neglect,  
And will make it plain and clear  
Who the sub. is he sent there  
To my office at the Glen—  
Or, if *not* one there,—who then  
Is indeed the criminal? . . .

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

I am going now to call  
On him.—Join me, gentlemen—  
I insist 'you come with me."  
Well, a sense of some respect  
Caught 'em,—and they followed, all,  
Silently, though sullenly.

Fortunately, half a square  
Brought 'em to the station and  
The crowd there that packed the small  
Waiting-room on every hand,  
With a kind o' general stand  
Round the half-door window through  
Which "old Roachy," in full view,  
Sat there, smilin' in a sick  
Sort o' way, yet gloryin', too,  
In the work he had to do.  
Mac worked closer, breathin' quick  
At the muttered talk of some  
Of the toughest of the crowd;  
Till, above the growl and hum  
Of the ominous voices, he  
Heard the click of "Roachy's" key,—  
And his heart beat 'most out 'loud  
As he heard him wirin':—"Yes,

## CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

Trouble down at *Glen*, I guess.  
Glen's fool-operator *here*—  
What's-his-name?—MacClintock.—Fear  
Mob will hang him.—Mob knows he  
Left his office.—And no doubt  
Wreck there on account of it.  
People worked-up here—and shout  
Now and then to 'Take him out!'—  
'Hang him!'—and so forth." . . . Mac lit  
Through the half-door window at  
"Roachy's" table like a cat:—  
*He was white*, but "*Roachy's*" face  
Made a brunette out o' *his*! . . .  
Mac had pinned him in his chair  
Helpless—and a message there  
Clickin' back from Pilot Knob.—  
"Tell these people, word-for-word,"  
Mac says, "what this message is!—  
*Tell 'em.—Hear me?*" "Roachy" heard  
And obeyed:—"We sized your job  
On MacClintock.—*Knob* here sent  
A sub. there.—And all O K  
At Glen-office.—Tie-up *here*—  
One hour's wait—all fault of *mine*.  
"*Hang MacClintock*," did you say?

CHRISTMAS ALONG THE WIRES

“*Hang* MacClintock?”—Certainly,—  
Hang him on the Christmas-Tree,  
With a label on for *me*,—  
I’ll be there on Number Nine.’”

## LET SOMETHING GOOD BE SAID

WHEN over the fair fame of friend or foe  
The shadow of disgrace shall fall, instead  
Of words of blame, or proof of thus and so,  
Let something good be said.

Forget not that no fellow-being yet  
May fall so low but love may lift his head:  
Even the cheek of shame with tears is wet,  
If something good be said.

No generous heart may vainly turn aside  
In ways of sympathy; no soul so dead  
But may awaken strong and glorified,  
If something good be said.

And so I charge ye, by the thorny crown,  
And by the cross on which the Saviour bled,  
And by your own souls' hope of fair renown,  
Let something good be said!



## MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER

WHAT is it in old fiddle-chunes 'at makes me ketch my  
breath

And ripples up my backbone tel I'm tickled most to  
death?—

Kind o' like that sweet-sick feelin', in the long sweep  
of a swing,

The first you ever swung in, with yer first sweetheart,  
i jing!—

Yer first picnic—yer first ice-cream—yer first o'  
*ever'thing*

'At happened 'fore yer dancin'-days wuz over!

I never understood it—and I s'pose I never can,—

But right in town here, yisterd'y, I heard a pore blind  
man

A-fiddlin' old "Gray Eagle"—*And-sir!* I jes stopped  
my load

MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER

O' hay and listened at him—yes, and watched the way  
he “bow'd,”—

And back I went, plum forty year', with boys and girls  
I knowed

And loved, long 'fore my dancin'-days wuz over!—

At high noon in yer city,—with yer blame' Magnetic-  
Cars

A-hummin' and a-screetchin' past—and bands and  
G. A. R.'s

A-marchin'—and fire-ingines.—*All* the noise, the  
whole street through,

Wuz lost on me!—I only heard a whipperwill er two,  
It 'peared-like, kind o' callin' 'crost the darkness and  
the dew,

Them nights afore my dancin'-days wuz over.

'Tuz Chused'y-night at Wetherell's, er We'n'sd'y-night  
at Strawn's,

Er Fourth-o'-July-night at uther Tomps's house er  
John's!—

With old Lew Church from Sugar Crick, with that  
old fiddle he

Had sawed clean through the Army, from Atlanty to  
the sea—

MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER

And yit he'd fetched her home ag'in, so's he could  
play fer me

Onc't more afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

The woods 'at's all be'n cut away wuz growin' same as  
then;

The youngsters all wuz boys ag'in 'at's now all oldish men;

And all the girls 'at *then* wuz girls—I saw 'em, one  
and all,

As *plain* as then—the middle-sized, the short-and-fat,  
and tall—

And 'peared-like, I danced "Tucker" fer 'em up and  
down the wall

Jes like afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

. . . . .

The facts is, I wuz *dazed* so 'at I clean fergot jes where  
I raily wuz,—a-blockin' streets, and still a-standin'  
there:

I heard the *po-leece* yellin', but my ears wuz kind o'  
*blurred*—

My *eyes*, too, fer the odds o' that,—bekase I thought  
I heard

My wife 'at's dead a-laughin'-like, and jokin', word-  
fer-word

Jes like afore her dancin'-days wuz over.

## HENRY W. GRADY

ATLANTA, DECEMBER 23, 1889

TRUE-HEARTED friend of all true friendliness!—  
Brother of all true brotherhoods!—Thy hand  
And its late pressure now we understand  
Most fully, as it falls thus gestureless  
And Silence hurls thee into sweet excess  
Of sleep. Sleep thou content!—Thy loved Southland  
Is swept with tears, as rain in sunshine; and  
Through all the frozen North our eyes confess  
Like sorrow—seeing still the princely sign  
Set on thy lifted brow, and the rapt light  
Of the dark, tender, melancholy eyes—  
Thrilled with the music of those lips of thine,  
And yet the fire thereof that lights the night  
With the white splendor of thy prophecies.

“O LIFE! O BEYOND!”

STRANGE—strange, O mortal Life,  
The perverse gifts that came to me from you!  
From childhood I have wanted *all* good things:  
You gave me few.

You gave me faith in One—  
Divine—above your own imperious might,  
O mortal Life, while I but wanted you  
And your delight.

I wanted dancing feet,  
And flowery, grassy paths by laughing streams;  
You gave me loitering steps, and eyes all blurred  
With tears and dreams.

I wanted love,—and, lo!  
As though in mockery, you gave me loss.  
O'erburdened sore, I wanted rest: you gave  
The heavier cross.

"O LIFE! O BEYOND!"

I wanted one poor hut  
For mine own home, to creep away into:  
You gave me only lonelier desert lands  
To journey through.

Now, at the last vast verge  
Of barren age, I stumble, reel, and fling  
Me down, with strength all spent and heart athirst  
And famishing.

Yea, now, Life, deal me death,—  
Your worst—your vaunted worst! . . . Across my  
breast  
With numb and fumbling hands I gird me for  
The best.

“HOME AG’IN”

### *HIS LOVE OF HOME*

*"As love of native land," the old man said,  
"Er stars and stripes a-wavin' overhead,  
Er nearest kith-and-kin, er daily bread,  
A Hoosier's love is fer the old homestead."*



## “HOME AG’IN”

I'M a-feelin' ruther sad,  
Fer a father proud and glad  
As *I* am—my only child  
Home, and all so rickonciled!  
Feel so strange-like, and don't know  
What the mischief ails me so!  
'Stid o' bad, I ort to be  
Feelin' good pertickerly—  
Yes, and extry thankful, too,  
'Cause my nearest kith-and-kin,  
My Elviry's schoolin' 's through,  
And I' got her home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!

Same as ef her mother'd been  
Livin', I have done my best  
By the girl, and watchfulest;

“HOME AG’IN”

Nussed her—keerful’ as I could—  
From a baby, day and night,—  
Drawin’ on the neighborhood  
And the women-folks as light  
As needssesity ’ud ’low—  
’Cept in “teethin’,” onc’t, and fight  
Through black-measles. Don’t know now  
How we ever saved the child!  
Doc *he’d* give her up, and said,  
As I stood there by the bed  
Sort o’ foolin’ with her hair  
On the hot, wet pillar there,  
“Wuz no use!”—And at them-air  
Very words she waked and smiled—  
Yes, and *knowed* me. And that’s where  
I broke down, and simply jes  
Bellered like a boy—I guess!—  
*Women* claimed I did, but I  
Allus helt I didn’t cry,  
But wuz laughin’,—and I *wuz*,—  
Men don’t cry like *women* does!  
Well, right then and there I felt  
’Tuz her mother’s doin’s, and,  
Jes like to myse’f, I knelt  
Whisperin’, “I understand.” . . .

“HOME AG’IN”

So I’ve raised her, you might say,  
Stric’ly in the narrer way  
’At her mother walked therein—  
Not so quite religiously,  
Yit still strivin’-like to do  
Ever’tthing a father *could*  
Do he knowed the *mother* would  
Ef she’d lived—And now all’s through  
And I’ got her home ag’in—  
Home ag’in with me!

And I’ been so lonesome, too,  
Here o’ late, especially,—  
“Old Aunt Abigail,” you know,  
Ain’t no company;—and so  
Jes the hired hand, you see—  
Jonas—like a relative  
More—sence he come here to live  
With us, nigh ten year’ ago.  
Still he don’t count much, you know,  
In the way o’ company—  
Lonesome, ’peared-like, ’most as me!  
So, as *I* say, I’ been so  
Special lonesome-like and blue,  
With Elviry, like she’s been,

“HOME AG’IN”

’Way so much, last two or three  
Year’—But now she’s home ag’in—  
Home ag’in with me!

Driv in fer her yisterday,  
Me and Jonas—gay and spry,—  
We jes cut up, all the way!—  
Yes, and sung!—tel, blame it! I  
Keyed my voice up ’bout as high  
As when—days ’at I wuz young—  
“Buckwheat-notes” wuz all they sung.  
Jonas bantered me, and ’greed  
To sing one ’at town-folks sing  
Down at Split Stump ’er High-Low—  
Some new “ballet,” said, ’at he’d  
Learnt—about “The Grapevine Swing.”  
And when *he* quit, *I* begun  
To chune up my voice and run  
Through the what’s-called “scales” and “do-  
Sol-me-fa’s” I *ust* to know—  
Then let loose old *favorite* one,  
“Hunters o’ Kentucky!” *My!*  
Tel I thought the boy would *die!*  
And we *both* laughed—Yes, and still  
Heerd more laughin’, top the hill;

“HOME AG’IN”

Fer we’d missed Elviry’s train,  
And she’d lit out ’crost the fields,—  
Dewdrops dancin’ at her heels,  
And cut up old Smoots’s lane  
So’s to meet us. And there in  
Shadder o’ the chinkypin,  
With a danglin’ dogwood-bough  
Bloomin’ ’bove her—See her now!—  
Sunshine sort o’ flickerin’ down  
And a kind o’ laughin’ all  
Round her new red parasol,  
Tryin’ to git at *her*!—well—like  
*I* jumped out and showed ’em how—  
Yes, and jes the place to strike  
That-air mouth o’ hern—as sweet  
As the blossoms breshed her brow  
Er sweet-williams round her feet—  
White and blushy, too, as she  
“Howdied” up to Jonas, and  
Jieuked her head, and waved her hand.  
“Hey!” says I, as she bounced in  
The spring-wagon, reachin’ back  
To give *me* a lift, “whoop-ee!”  
I-says-ee, “you’re home ag’in—  
Home ag’in with me!”

“HOME AG’IN”

Lord! how *wild* she wuz, and glad,  
Gittin’ home!—and things she had  
To inquire about, and talk—  
Plowin’, plantin’, and the stock—  
News o’ neighborhood; and how  
Wuz the Deem-girls doin’ now,  
Sence that-air young chicken-hawk  
They was “tamin’” soared away  
With their settin’-hen, one day?—  
(Said she’d got Mame’s postal-card  
’Bout it, very day ’at she  
Started home from Bethany.)  
How wuz produce—eggs, and lard?—  
Er wuz stores still claimin’ “hard  
Times,” as usual? And, says she,  
Troubled-like, “How’s Deedie—say?  
Sence pore child e-loped away  
And got back, and goin’ to ’ply  
Fer school-license by and by—  
And where’s ’Lijy workin’ at?  
And how’s ‘Aunt’ and ‘Uncle Jake’?  
How wuz ‘Old Maje’—and the cat?  
And wuz Marthy’s baby fat  
As his ‘Humpty-Dumpty’ ma?—  
Sweetest thing she ever saw!—

" HOME AG'IN "

Must run 'crost and see her, too,  
Soon as she turned in and got  
Supper fer us—smokin'-hot—  
And the 'dishes' all wuz through.—"  
*Sich* a supper! W'y, I set  
There and et, and et, and et!—  
Jes et on, tel Jonas he  
Pushed his chair back, laughed, and says,  
"I could walk *his* log!" and we  
All laughed then, tel 'Viry she  
Lit the lamp—and I give in!—  
Riz and kissed her: "Heaven bless  
You!" says I—"you're home ag'in—  
Same old dimple in your chin,  
Same white apern," I-says-ee,  
"Same sweet girl, and good to see  
As your *mother* ust to be,—  
And I' got you home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!"

I turns then to go on by her  
Through the door—and see her eyes  
Both wuz swimmin', and she tries  
To say somepin'—can't—and so  
Grabs and hugs and lets me go.

“HOME AG’IN”

Noticed Aunty’d made a fire  
In the settin’-room and gone  
Back where her p’serves wuz on  
Bilin’ in the kitchen. I  
Went out on the porch and set,  
Thinkin’-like. And by and by  
Heerd Elviry, soft and low,  
At the organ, kind o’ go  
A mi-anderin’ up and down  
With her fingers ’mongst the keys—  
“Vacant Chair” and “Old Camp-Groun’.” . . .  
Dusk was moist-like, with a breeze  
Lazin’ round the locus’-trees—  
Heerd the hosses champin’, and  
Jonas feedin’, and the hogs—  
Yes, and katydids and frogs—  
And a tree-toad, somers. Heerd  
Also whipperwills.—*My land!*—  
All so mournful ever’where—  
Them out here, and her in there,—  
’Most like ’tendin’ *services!*  
*Anyway*, I must ’a’ jes  
Kind o’ drapped asleep, I guess;  
’Cause when Jonas must ’a’ passed  
Me, a-comin’ in, I knowed



“ HOME AG’IN ”

Nothin’ of it—yit it seemed  
Sort o’ like I kind o’ dreamed  
’Bout him, too, a-slippin’ in,  
And a-watchin’ back to see  
Ef I *wuz* asleep, and then  
Passin’ in where ’Viry wuz;  
And where I declare it does  
’Pear to me I heerd him say,  
Wild and glad and whisperin’—  
’Peared-like heerd him say, says-ee,  
“ Ah! I’ got you home ag’in—  
Home ag’in with me!”

## EMERSON

CONCORD, APRIL 27, 1882

WHAT shall we say? In quietude,  
Within his home, in dreams unguessed,  
He lies; the grief a nation would  
Evince must be repressed.

Nor meet is it the loud acclaim  
His countrymen would raise—that he  
Has left the riches of his fame  
The whole world's legacy.

Then, prayerful, let us pause until  
We find, as grateful spirits can,  
The way most worthy to fulfil  
The tribute due the man.

Think what were best in his regard  
Who voyaged life in such a cause:  
Our simplest faith were best reward—  
Our silence, best applause.

## WHITTIER—AT NEWBURYPORT

SEPTEMBER 7, 1892

HAIL to thee, with all good cheer!  
Though men say thou liest here  
Dead,  
And mourn, all uncomforted.

By thy faith refining mine,  
Life still lights those eyes of thine,  
Clear  
As the Autumn atmosphere.

Ever still thy smile appears  
As the rainbow of thy tears  
Bent  
O'er thy love's vast firmament.

Thou endurest—shalt endure,  
Purely, as thy song is pure.  
Hear  
Thus my hail: Good cheer! good cheer!

## THE ONWARD TRAIL

MYRON W. REED, DENVER, JANUARY 30, 1899

JUST as of old,—with fearless foot  
And placid face and resolute,  
He takes the faint, mysterious trail  
That leads beyond our earthly hail.

We would cry, as in last farewell,  
But that his hand waves, and a spell  
Is laid upon our tongues: and thus  
He takes unworded leave of us.

And it is fitting:—As he fared  
Here with us, so is he prepared  
For any fortuning the night  
May hold for him beyond our sight.

The moon and stars they still attend  
His wandering footsteps to the end,—

## THE ONWARD TRAIL

He did not question, nor will we,  
Their guidance and security.

So, never parting word nor cry:—  
We feel, with him, that by and by  
Our onward trails will meet and then  
Merge and be ever one again.

## LINCOLN

A PEACEFUL life;—just toil and rest—  
All his desire;—  
To read the books he liked the best  
Beside the cabin fire—  
God's word and man's;—to peer sometimes  
Above the page, in smouldering gleams,  
And catch, like far heroic rhymes,  
The onmarch of his dreams.

A peaceful life;—to hear the low  
Of pastured herds,  
Or woodman's axe that, blow on blow,  
Fell sweet as rhythmic words.  
And yet there stirred within his breast  
A fateful pulse that, like a roll  
Of drums, made high above his rest  
A tumult in his soul.

LINCOLN

A peaceful life! . . . They haled him even  
As One was haled  
Whose open palms were nailed toward Heaven  
When prayers nor aught availed.  
And, lo, he paid the selfsame price  
To lull a nation's awful strife  
And will us, through the sacrifice  
Of self, his peaceful life.

## YOUR HEIGHT IS OURS

TO RICHARD HENRY STODDARD, AT THE STODDARD  
BANQUET BY THE AUTHORS CLUB,  
NEW YORK, MARCH 25, 1897

O PRINCELY poet!—kingly heir  
Of gifts divinely sent,—  
Your own!—nor envy anywhere,  
Nor voice of discontent.

Though, of ourselves, all poor are we,  
And frail and weak of wing,  
Your height is ours—your ecstasy—  
Your glory, when you sing.

Most favored of the gods, and great  
In gifts beyond our store,  
We covet not your rich estate,  
But prize our own the more.—



YOUR HEIGHT IS OURS

The gods give as but gods may do—

We count *our* riches thus,—

They gave their richest gifts to you,

And then gave you to us.

## HYMN EXULTANT

FOR EASTER

VOICE of Mankind, sing over land and sea—

Sing, in this glorious morn!

The long, long night is gone from Calvary—

The cross, the thong and thorn;

The sealed tomb yields up its saintly guest,

No longer to be burdened and oppressed.

Heart of Mankind, thrill answer to His own,

So human, yet divine!

For earthly love He left His heavenly throne—

For love like thine and mine—

For love of us, as one might kiss a bride,

His lifted lips touched death's, all satisfied.

Soul of Mankind, He wakes—He lives once more!

O soul, with heart and voice

Sing! sing!—the stone rolls chorus from the door—

Our Lord stands forth.—Rejoice!

Rejoice, O garden-land of song and flowers;

Our King returns to us, forever ours!

## A SONG OF THE ROAD

O I WILL walk with you, my lad, whichever way you  
fare,  
You'll have me, too, the side o' you, with heart as light  
as air;  
No care for where the road you take's a-leadin'—  
*anywhere*,—  
It can but be a joyful jant the whilst *you* journey  
there.  
The road you take's the path o' love, an' that's the  
brith o' two—  
And I will walk with you, my lad—O I will walk with  
you.

Ho! I will walk with you, my lad,  
Be weather black or blue  
Or roadsides frost or dew, my lad—  
O I will walk with you.

A SONG OF THE ROAD

Ay, glad, my lad, I'll walk with you, whatever winds  
    may blow,  
Or summer blossoms stay our steps, or blinding drifts  
    of snow;  
The way that you set face and foot's the way that I  
    will go,  
And brave I'll be, abreast o' you, the Saints and Angels  
    know!  
With loyal hand in loyal hand, and one heart made o'  
    two,  
Through summer's gold, or winter's cold, it's I will  
    walk with you.

Sure, I will walk with you, my lad,  
    As love ordains me to,—  
To Heaven's door, and through, my lad,  
    O I will walk with you.

## RED RIDING-HOOD

SWEET little myth of the nursery story—  
Earliest love of mine infantile breast,  
Be something tangible, bloom in thy glory  
Into existence, as thou art addressed!  
Hasten! appear to me, guileless and good—  
Thou art so dear to me, Red Riding-Hood!

Azure-blue eyes, in a marvel of wonder,  
Over the dawn of a blush breaking out;  
Sensitive nose, with a little smile under  
Trying to hide in a blossoming pout—  
Couldn't be serious, try as you would,  
Little mysterious Red Riding-Hood!

Hah! little girl, it is desolate, lonely,  
Out in this gloomy old forest of Life!—  
Here are not pansies and buttercups only—  
Brambles and briars as keen as a knife;  
And a Heart, ravenous, trails in the wood  
For the meal he must, —Red Riding-Hood!

## THE MOTHER SAINTED

AND yet she does not stir,—  
Such silence weighs on her  
    We hear the drip  
Of tear-drops as we press  
Our kisses answerless  
    On brow and lip.

Not even the yearning touch  
Of lips she loved so much  
    She made their breath  
One with her own, will she  
Give answer to and be  
    Woody back from death.

And though he kneel and plead  
Who was her greatest need,  
    And on her cheek  
Lay the soft baby-face  
In its old resting-place,  
    She will not speak.

## THE CHRIST

“FATHER!” (so The Word) he cried,—  
“Son of Thine, and yet denied;  
By my brothers dragged and tried,  
Scoffed and scourged, and crucified,  
With a thief on either side—  
Brothers mine, alike belied,—  
Arms of mercy open wide,  
Father! Father!” So he died.

TO "UNCLE REMUS"

WE love your dear old face and voice—  
We're *all* Miss Sally's Little Boys,  
    Climbin' your knee,  
    In ecstasy,  
Rejoicin' in your Creeturs' joys  
    And trickery.

The Lord who made the day and night,  
He made the Black man and the White;  
    So, in like view,  
    We hold it true  
That He hain't got no favorite—  
    Unless it's you.



## TO ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

ON HIS FIRST VISIT TO AMERICA

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON!

Blue the lift and braw the dawn  
O' yer comin' here amang  
Strangers wha hae luved ye lang!  
Strangers tae ye we maun be,  
Yet tae us ye're kenned a wee  
By the writin's ye hae done,  
Robert Louis Stevenson.

Syne ye've pit yer pen tae sic'  
Tales it stabbt us tae the quick—  
Whiles o' tropic isles an' seas  
An' o' gowden treesuries—  
Tales o' deid men's banes; an' tales  
Swete as sangs o' nightingales  
When the nune o' mirk's begun—  
Robert Louis Stevenson.

TO ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Sae we hail thee! nane the less  
For the "burr" that ye caress  
Wi' yer denty tongue o' Scots,  
Makin' words forget-me-nots  
O' yer bonnie braes that were  
Sung o' Burns the Poemer—  
And that later lavrock, one  
Robert Louis Stevenson.

ON A YOUTHFUL PORTRAIT OF  
STEVENSON

A FACE of youth mature; a mouth of tender,  
Sad, human sympathy, yet something stoic  
In clasp of lip: wide eyes of calmest splendor,  
And brow serenely ample and heroic:—

The features—all—lit with a soul ideal . . .

O visionary boy! what were you seeing,  
What hearing, as you stood thus midst the real  
Ere yet one master-work of yours had being?

Is it a foolish fancy that we humor—

Investing daringly with life and spirit  
This youthful portrait of you ere one rumor

Of your great future spoke that men might hear it?—  
Is it a fancy, or your first of glories,

That you were listening, and the camera drew you  
Hearing the voices of your untold stories

And all your lovely poems calling to you?

## THE TRAVELLING MAN

### I

COULD I pour out the nectar the gods only can,  
I would fill up my glass to the brim  
And drink the success of the Travelling Man,  
And the house represented by him;  
And could I but tincture the glorious draught  
With his smiles, as I drank to him then,  
And the jokes he has told and the laughs he has  
laughed,  
I would fill up the goblet again—

And drink to the sweetheart who gave him good-bye  
With a tenderness thrilling him this  
Very hour, as he thinks of the tear in her eye  
That salted the sweet of her kiss;  
To her truest of hearts and her fairest of hands  
I would drink, with all serious prayers,  
Since the heart she must trust is a Travelling Man's,  
And as warm as the ulster he wears.

## THE TRAVELLING MAN

### II

I would drink to the wife, with the babe on her knee,  
Who awaits his returning in vain—  
Who breaks his brave letters so tremulously  
And reads them again and again!  
And I'd drink to the feeble old mother who sits  
At the warm fireside of her son  
And murmurs and weeps o'er the stocking she knits,  
As she thinks of the wandering one.

I would drink a long life and a health to the friends  
Who have met him with smiles and with cheer—  
To the generous hand that the landlord extends  
To the wayfarer journeying here:  
And I pledge, when he turns from this earthly abode  
And pays the last fare that he can,  
Mine Host of the Inn at the End of the Road  
Will welcome the Travelling Man!

## FROM DELPHI TO CAMDEN

### I

FROM Delphi to Camden—little Hoosier towns,—  
But here were classic meadows, blooming dales and  
downs;

And here were grassy pastures, dewy as the leas  
Trampled over by the trains of royal pageantries!

And here the winding highway loitered through the  
shade

Of the hazel-covert, where, in ambuscade,  
Loomed the larch and linden, and the greenwood-tree  
Under which bold Robin Hood loud hallooed to me!

Here the stir and riot of the busy day  
Dwindled to the quiet of the breath of May;  
Gurgling brooks, and ridges lily-marged and spanned  
By the rustic bridges found in Wonderland!

## FROM DELPHI TO CAMDEN

### II

From Delphi to Camden,—from Camden back again!—  
And now the night was on us, and the lightning and the  
rain;

And still the way was wondrous with the flash of hill  
and plain,—

The stars like printed asterisks—the moon a murky  
stain!

And I thought of tragic idyl, and of flight and hot  
pursuit,

And the jingle of the bridle and cuirass, and spur on  
boot,

As our horses' hooves struck showers from the flinty  
boulders set

In freshet-ways of writhing reed and drowning violet.

And we passed beleaguered castles, with their battle-  
ments a-frown;

Where a tree fell in the forest was a turret toppled  
down;

While my master and commander—the brave knight I  
galloped with

On this reckless road to ruin or to fame was—Dr.  
Smith!

## THE BALLADE OF THE COMING RAIN

WHEN the morning swoons in its highest heat,  
And the sunshine dims, and no dark shade  
Streaks the dust of the dazzling street,  
And the long straw splits in the lemonade;  
When the circus lags in a sad parade,  
And the drum throbs dull as a pulse of pain,  
And the breezeless flags hang limp and frayed—  
O then is the time to look for rain.

When the man on the watering-cart bumps by,  
Trilling the air of an old fife-tune,  
With a dull, soiled smile, and one shut eye,  
Lost in a dream of the afternoon;  
When the awning sags like a lank balloon,  
And a thick sweat stands on the window-pane,  
And a five-cent fan is a priceless boon—  
O then is the time to look for rain.



THE BALLADE OF THE COMING RAIN

When the goldfish tank is a grimy gray,  
And the dummy stands at the clothing-store  
With a cap pulled on in a rakish way,  
And a rubber-coat with the 'hind before;  
When the man in the barber chair flops o'er  
And the chin he wags has a telltale stain,  
And the bootblack lurks at the open door—  
O then is the time to look for rain.

## TO THE JUDGE

A VOICE FROM THE INTERIOR OF OLD HOOP-POLE  
TOWNSHIP

FRIEND of my earliest youth,

Can't you arrange to come down  
And visit a fellow out here in the woods—

Out of the dust of the town?  
Can't you forget you're a Judge  
And put by your dolorous frown  
And tan your wan face in the smile of a friend—  
Can't you arrange to come down?

Can't you forget for a while  
The arguments prosy and drear,—  
To lean at full-length in indefinite rest  
In the lap of the greenery here?

Can't you kick over "the Bench,"  
And "husk" yourself out of your gown  
To dangle your legs where the fishing is good—  
Can't you arrange to come down?

## TO THE JUDGE

ah! for your office of State!  
And bah! for its technical lore!  
What does our President, high in his chair,  
But wish himself low as before!  
Pick between peasant and king,—  
Poke your bald head through a crown  
Or shadow it here with the laurels of Spring!—  
Can't you arrange to come down?

"Judge it" out *here*, if you will,—  
The birds are in session by dawn;  
You can draw, not *complaints*, but a sketch of the hill  
And a breath that your betters have drawn;  
You can open your heart, like a case,  
To a jury of kine, white and brown,  
And their verdict of "Moo" will just satisfy you!—  
Can't you arrange to come down?

Can't you arrange it, old Pard?—  
Pigeonhole Blackstone and Kent!—  
Here we have "Breitmann," and Ward,  
Twain, Burdette, Nye, and content!  
Can't you forget you're a Judge  
And put by your dolorous frown  
And tan your wan face in the smile of a friend—  
Can't you arrange to come down?

## A FEEL IN THE CHRIS'MAS-AIR

THEY'S a kind o' *feel* in the air, to me,  
When the Chris'mas-times sets in,  
That's about as much of a mystery  
As ever I've run ag'in'!—  
Fer instunce, now, whilse I gain in weight  
And ginerall health, I swear  
They's a *goneness* somers I can't quite state—  
A kind o' *feel* in the air!

They's a feel in the Chris'mas-air goes right  
To the spot where a man *lives* at!—  
It gives a feller a' appetite—  
They ain't no doubt about *that*!—  
And yit they's *somepin'*—I don't know what—  
That follers me, here and there,  
And ha'nts and worries and spares me not—  
A kind o' feel in the air!

A FEEL IN THE CHRIS'MAS-AIR

They's a *feel*, as I say, in the air that's jest  
As blame-don sad as sweet!—  
In the same ra-sho as I feel the best  
And am spryest on my feet,  
They's allus a kind o' sort of a' *ache*  
That I can't lo-cate no-where;—  
But it comes with *Chris'mas*, and no mistake!—  
A kind o' feel in the air.

Is it the racket the childern raise?—  
W'y, *no!*—God bless 'em!—*no!*—  
Is it the eyes and the cheeks ablaze—  
Like my *own* wuz, long ago?—  
Is it the bleat o' the whistle and beat  
O' the little toy-drum and blare  
O' the horn?—*No! no!*—it is jest the sweet—  
The sad-sweet feel in the air.

## ON A FLY-LEAF

IN JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY'S POEMS

SINGERS there are of courtly themes—

*Drapers* in verse—who would dress their rhymes  
In robes of ermine; and singers of dreams  
Of gods high-throned in the classic times;  
Singers of nymphs, in their dim retreats,  
Satyrs, with sceptre and diadem;  
But the singer who sings as a man's heart beats  
Well may blush for the rest of them.

I like the thrill of such poems as these,—

All spirit and fervor of splendid fact—  
Pulse, and muscle, and arteries  
Of living, heroic thought and act!—  
Where every line is a vein of red  
And rapturous blood all unconfined  
As it leaps from a heart that has joyed and bled  
With the rights and the wrongs of all mankind.

## THE SERMON OF THE ROSE

WILFUL we are, in our infirmity  
Of childish questioning and discontent.  
Whate'er befalls us is divinely meant—  
Thou Truth the clearer for thy mystery!  
Make us to meet what is or is to be  
With fervid welcome, knowing it is sent  
To serve us in some way full excellent,  
Though we discern it all belatedly.  
The rose buds, and the rose blooms, and the rose  
Bows in the dews, and in its fulness, lo,  
Is in the lover's hand,—then on the breast  
Of her he loves,—and there dies.—And who knows  
What fate of all a rose may undergo  
Is fairest, dearest, sweetest, loveliest?

Nay, we are children: we will not mature.  
A blessed gift must seem a theft; and tears  
Must storm our eyes when but a joy appears  
In drear disguise of sorrow; and how poor

## THE SERMON OF THE ROSE

We seem when we are richest,—most secure  
Against all poverty the lifelong years  
We yet must waste in childish doubts and fears  
That, in despite of reason, still endure!  
Alas! the sermon of the rose we will  
Not wisely ponder; nor the sobs of grief  
Lulled into sighs of rapture, nor the cry  
Of fierce defiance that again is still.  
Be patient—patient with our frail belief,  
And stay it yet a little ere we die.

O opulent life of ours, though dispossessed  
Of treasure after treasure! Youth most fair  
Went first, but left its priceless coil of hair—  
Moaned over, sleepless nights, kissed and caressed  
Through drip and blur of tears the tenderest.  
And next went Love—the ripe rose glowing there,  
Her very sister! . . . *It* is here, but where  
Is *she*, of all the world the first and best?  
And yet how sweet the sweet earth after rain—  
How sweet the sunlight on the garden-wall  
Across the roses—and how sweetly flows  
The limpid yodel of the brook again!  
And yet—and yet how sweeter, after all,  
The smouldering sweetness of a dead red rose!



OSCAR C. McCULLOCH

INDIANAPOLIS, DECEMBER 12, 1891

WHAT would best please our friend, in token of  
The sense of our great loss?—Our sighs and tears?  
Nay, these he fought against through all his years,  
Heroically voicing, high above  
Grief's ceaseless minor, moaning like a dove,  
The pæan triumphant that the soldier hears,  
Scaling the walls of death, midst shouts and cheers,  
The old Flag laughing in his eyes' last love.

Nay, then, to pleasure him were it not meet  
To yield him bravely, as his fate arrives?—  
Drape him in radiant roses, head and feet,  
And be partakers, while his work survives,  
Of his fair fame,—paying the tribute sweet  
To all humanity—our nobler lives.

## THE LOVING CUP

TRANCED in the glamour of a dream  
Where banquet-lights and fancies gleam,  
And ripest wit and wine abound,  
And pledges hale go round and round,—  
Lo, dazzled with enchanted rays—  
'As in the golden olden days  
Sir Galahad—my eyes swim up  
To greet your splendor, Loving Cup!

What is the secret of your art,  
Linking together hand and heart  
Your myriad votaries who do  
Themselves most honor honoring you?  
What gracious service have you done  
To win the name that you have won?—  
Kissing it back from tuneful lips  
That sing your praise between the sips!

## THE LOVING CUP

Your spicy breath, O Loving Cup,  
That, like an incense steaming up,  
Full-freighted with a fragrance fine  
As ever swooned on sense of mine,  
Is rare enough.—But then, ah me!  
How rarer every memory  
That, rising with it, wreathes and blends  
In forms and faces of my friends!

O Loving Cup! in fancy still,  
I clasp their hands, and feel the thrill  
Of fellowship that still endures  
While lips are theirs and wine is yours!  
And while my memory journeys down  
The years that lead to Boston Town,  
Abide where first were rendered up  
Our mutual loves, O Loving Cup!

## SAY SOMETHING TO ME

SAY something to me! I've waited so long—  
    Waited and wondered in vain;  
Only a sentence would fall like a song  
    Over this listening pain—  
Over a silence that glowers and frowns,—  
    Even my pencil to-night  
Slips in the dews of my sorrow and wounds  
    Each tender word that I write.

Say something to me—if only to tell  
    Me you remember the past;  
Let the sweet words, like the notes of a bell,  
    Ring out my vigil at last.  
O it were better, far better than this  
    Doubt and distrust in the breast,—  
For in the wine of a fanciful kiss  
    I could taste Heaven, and—rest.

SAY SOMETHING TO ME

Say something to me! I kneel and I plead,  
In my wild need, for a word;  
If my poor heart from this silence were freed,  
I could soar up like a bird  
In the glad morning, and twitter and sing,  
Carol and warble and cry  
Blithe as the lark as he cruises awing  
Over the deeps of the sky.

## A WHOLLY UNSCHOLASTIC OPINION

PLAIN hoss-sense in poetry-writin'  
Would jes knock sentiment a-kitin'!  
Mostly poets is all star-gazin'  
And moanin' and groanin' and paraphrasin'!

## A SHORT'NIN' BREAD SONG—PIECED OUT

BEHINE de hen-house, on my knees,  
Thought I hearn a chickin sneeze—  
Sneezed so hard wi' de whoopin'-cough  
I thought he'd sneeze his blame' head off.

### CHORUS

*Fotch dat dough fum de kitchin-shed—  
Rake dem coals out hot an' red—  
Putt on de oven an' putt on de led,—  
Mammy's gwineter cook some short'nin' bread.*

O I' got a house in Baltimo'—  
Street-kyars run right by my do'—  
Street-kyars run right by my gate,  
Hit's git up soon an' set up late.

### (CHORUS)

De raincrow hide in some ole tree  
An' holler out, all hoarse, at me—

A SHORT'NIN' BREAD SONG—PIECED OUT

Sayes, "When I sing, de rain hit po'  
So's you ain't 'bleedged to plow no mo'!"

(CHORUS)

Ole man Toad, on High-low Hill,  
He steal my dram an' drink his fill,—  
Heels in the path, an' toes in the grass—  
Hit ain't de fus' time an' shain't be de las'!

(CHORUS)

When corn-plantin' done come roun',  
Blackbird own de whole plowed-groun',—  
Corn in de grain, as I've hearn said,  
Dat's de blackbird's short'nin' bread.

(CHORUS)

De sweetes' chune what evah I heard  
Is de sairanade o' de mockin'-bird;  
Whilse de mou'nfullest an' de least I love  
Is de Sund'y-song o' de ole woods-dove.

(CHORUS)

I nevah ain't know, outside o' school,  
A smartah mare dan my ole mule,—



A SHORT'NIN' BREAD SONG—PIECED OUT

I holler "Wo," an' she go "gee,"  
Des lak' de good Lord chast'nin' me.

(CHORUS)

Hit's no houn'-pup I taken to raise  
Hain't nevah jes'ly airn' my praise:  
De mo' cawn-pone I feed dat pup,  
De mo' he des won't fattnin up.

(CHORUS)

I hangs a hoss-shoe ovah my head,  
An' I keeps a' ole sieve under de bed,  
So, quinchiquently, I sleep soun',  
Wid no ole witches pester'n' roun'.

(CHORUS)

I jine de chu'ch las' Chuesday night,  
But when Sis' Jane ain't treat me right  
I 'low her chu'ch ain' none o' mine,  
So I 'nounce to all I done on-jine.

(CHORUS)

## CASSANDER

“CASSANDER! O, Cassander!”—her mother’s voice  
seems cle’r

As ever, from the old back-porch, a-hollerin’ fer her—  
Especially in airly Spring—like May, two year’ ago—  
*Last* time she hollered fer her,—and Cassander didn’t  
hear!

Cassander was so chirpy-like and sociable and free,  
And good to ever’body, and wuz even good to me  
Though *I* wuz jes a common—well, a farm-hand,  
don’t you know,  
A-workin’ on her father’s place, as pore as pore could  
be!

Her bein’ jes a’ only child, Cassander had her way  
A good’-eal more’n other girls; and neighbors ust to say  
She looked most like her Mother, but wuz turned  
most like her Pap,—  
Except *he* had no use fer *town*-folks then—ner *yit*  
*to-day*!

CASSANDER

I can't claim she encouraged *me*: She'd let me drive  
her in  
To town sometimes, on Saturd'ys, and fetch her home  
ag'in,  
Tel onc't she 'scused "Old Moll" and me,—and some  
blame' city-chap,  
*He* driv her home, two-forty style, in face o' kith-and-  
kin.

She even tried to make him stay fer supper, but I 'low  
He must 'a' kindo' 'spicioned some objections.—Anyhow,  
Her mother callin' at her, whilse her father stood  
and shook  
His fist,—the town-chap turnt his team and made his  
partin' bow.

"Cassander! *You*, Cassander!"—hear her mother jes  
as plain,  
And see Cassander blushin' like the peach-tree down  
the lane,  
Whilse I sneaked on apast her, with a sort o' hang-  
dog look,  
A-feelin' cheap as sorghum and as green as sugar-cane!  
(You see, I'd *skooted* when she met her *town-beau*—  
when, in fact,

CASSANDER

Ef I'd had sense I'd *stayed* fer her.—But sense wuz  
what I lacked!

So I'd cut home ahead o' her, so's I could tell 'em what  
Wuz keepin' her. And—*you* know how a jealous fool 'll  
act!)

I past her, I wuz sayin',—but she never turnt her head;  
I swallered-like and cle'ed my th'oat—but that wuz all  
I said;

And whilse I hoped fer some word back, it wuzn't  
what I got.—

That girl 'll not stay stiller on the day she's layin'  
dead!

Well, that-air silence *lasted*!—Ust to listen ever' day  
I'd be at work and hear her mother callin' thataway;

I'd *sight* Cassander, mayby, cuttin' home acrost the  
blue

And drizzly fields; but nary answer—nary word to say!

Putt in about two weeks o' that—two weeks o' rain and  
mud,

Er mostly so: I couldn't plow. The old crick like a  
flood:

And, lonesome as a borried dog, I'd wade them old  
woods through—

CASSANDER

The dogwood blossoms white as snow, and redbuds red  
as blood.

*Last* time her mother called her—sich a morning like as  
now:

The robins and the bluebirds, and the blossoms on the  
bough—

And this wuz yit 'fore brekfust, with the sun out at  
his best,

And hosses kickin' in the barn—and dry enough to  
plow.

“Cassander! O, Cassander!” . . . And her only  
answer—What?—

A letter, twisted round the cookstove-damper, smokin'-  
hot,

A-statin': “I wuz married on that day of all the rest,  
The day my husband fetched me home—ef you ain't all  
fergot!”

“Cassander! O, Cassander!” seems, allus, 'long in May,  
I hear her mother callin' her—a-callin', night and day—

“Cassander! O, Cassander!” allus callin', as I say,  
“Cassander! O, Cassander!” jes a-callin' thataway.

## EUGENE FIELD

WITH gentlest tears, no less than jubilee  
Of blithest joy, we heard him, and still hear  
Him singing on, with full voice, pure and clear,  
Uplifted, as some classic melody  
In sweetest legends of old minstrelsy;  
Or, swarming Elfin-like upon the ear,  
His airy notes make all the atmosphere  
One blur of bird and bee and lullaby.  
His tribute:—Lustre in the faded bloom  
Of cheeks of old, old mothers; and the fall  
Of gracious dew in eyes long dry and dim;  
And hope in lovers' pathways midst perfume  
Of woodland haunts; and—meed exceeding all,—  
The love of little children laurels him.

## A BALLAD

WITH A SERIOUS CONCLUSION

CROWD about me, little children—  
Come and cluster 'round my knee  
While I tell a little story  
That happened once with me.

My father he had gone away  
A-sailing on the foam,  
Leaving me—the merest infant—  
And my mother dear at home;

For my father was a sailor,  
And he sailed the ocean o'er  
For full five years ere yet again  
He reached his native shore.

And I had grown up rugged  
And healthy day by day,  
Though I was but a puny babe  
When father went away.

A BALLAD

Poor mother she would kiss me  
And look at me and sigh  
So strangely, oft I wondered  
And would ask the reason why.

And she would answer sadly,  
Between her sobs and tears,—  
“You look so like your father,  
Far away so many years!”

And then she would caress me  
And brush my hair away,  
And tell me not to question,  
But to run about my play.

Thus I went playing thoughtfully—  
For that my mother said,—  
*“You look so like your father!”*  
Kept ringing in my head.

So, ranging once the golden sands  
That looked out on the sea,  
I called aloud, “My father dear,  
Come back to ma and me!”



A BALLAD

Then I saw a glancing shadow  
On the sand, and heard the shriek  
Of a sea-gull flying seaward,  
And I heard a gruff voice speak:—

“Ay, ay, my little shipmate,  
I thought I heard you hail;  
Were you trumpeting that sea-gull,  
Or do you see a sail?”

And as rough and gruff a sailor  
As ever sailed the sea  
Was standing near grotesquely  
And leering dreadfully.

I replied, though I was frightened,—  
“It was my father dear  
I was calling for across the sea—  
I think he didn’t hear.”

And then the sailor leered again  
In such a frightful way,  
And made so many faces  
I was little loath to stay:

A BALLAD

But he started fiercely toward me—  
Then made a sudden halt  
And roared, "*I think he heard you!*"  
And turned a somersault.

Then a wild fear overcame me,  
And I flew off like the wind,  
Shrieking "*Mother!*"—and the sailor  
Just a little way behind!

And then my mother heard me,  
And I saw her shade her eyes,  
Looking toward me from the doorway,  
Transfixed with pale surprise

For a moment—then her features  
Glowed with all their wonted charms  
As the sailor overtook me,  
And I fainted in her arms.

When I awoke to reason  
I shuddered with affright  
Till I felt my mother's presence  
With a thrill of wild delight—

A BALLAD

Till, amid a shower of kisses  
Falling glad as summer rain,  
A muffled thunder rumbled,—  
“Is he coming ’round again?”

Then I shrieked and clung unto her,  
While her features flushed and burned  
As she told me it was father  
From a foreign land returned.

. . . . .

I said—when I was calm again,  
And thoughtfully once more  
Had dwelt upon my mother’s words  
Of just the day before,—

“I *don’t* look like my father,  
As you told me yesterday—  
I know I don’t—or father  
Would have run the other way.”

## THE GREEN GRASS OF OLD IRELAND

THE green grass av owld Ireland!

Whilst I be far away,

All fresh an' clean an' jewel-green

It's growin' there to-day.

Oh, it's cleaner, greener growin'—

All the grassy worrld around,

It's greener yet nor any grass

That grows on top o' ground!

The green grass av owld Ireland,

Indade, an' balm 't'ud be

To eyes like mine that drip wid brine

As salty as the sea!

For still the more I'm stoppin' here,

The more I'm sore to see

The glory av the green grass av owld Ireland.

Ten years ye've paid my airnin's—

I've the l'avin's on the shelf,

THE GREEN GRASS OF OLD IRELAND

Though I be here widout a queen

An' own meself meself:

I'm comin' over steerage,

But I'm goin' back firrst-class,

Patrollin' av the foremost deck

For firrst sight av the grass.

God bless yez, free Ameriky!

I love yez, dock an' shore!

I kem to yez in poverty

That's worstin' me no more.

But most I'm lovin' Erin yet,

Wid all her graves, d'ye see,

By reason av the green grass av owld Ireland.

## AT HIS WINTRY TENT

SAMUEL RICHARDS—ARTIST—DENVER, COLORADO

Not only master of his art was he,  
But master of his spirit—winged indeed  
For lordliest height, yet poised for lowliest need  
Of those, alas! upheld less buoyantly.  
He gloried even in adversity,  
And won his country's plaudits, and the meed  
Of Old World praise, as one loath to succeed  
While others were denied like victory.  
Though passed, I count him still my master-friend,  
Invincible as through his mortal fight,—  
The laughing light of faith still in his eye  
As, at his wintry tent, pitched at the end  
Of life, he gayly called to me "Good night,  
Old friend, good night—for there is no good-bye."

## OUR QUEER OLD WORLD

*Fer them 'at's here in airliest infant stages,*

*It's a hard world :*

*Fer them 'at gits the knocks of boyhood's ages,*

*It's a mean world :*

*Fer them 'at nothin's good enough they're gittin',*

*It's a bad world :*

*Fer them 'at learns at last what's right and fittin',*

*It's a good world.*

THE HIRED MAN.

It's a purty hard world you find, my child—

It's a purty hard world you find!

You fight, little rascal! and kick and squall,

And snort out medicine, spoon and all!

When you're here longer you'll change your mind

And simmer down sorto' half-rickonciled.

But *now*—Jee!-

*My!*-mun-nee!

It's a purty hard world, my child!

## OUR QUEER OLD WORLD

It's a purty mean world you're in, my lad—

It's a purty mean world you're in!

We know, of course, in your schoolboy-days

It's a world of too many troublesome ways

Of tryin' things over and startin' ag'in,—

Yit *your* chance beats what your *parents* had.

But *now*—O!

Fire-and-tow!

It's a purty mean world, my lad!

It's a purty bad world you've struck, young chap—

It's a purty bad world you've struck—

But *study* the cards that you hold, you know,

And your hopes will sprout and your mustache grow,

And your store-clothes likely will change your  
luck,

And you'll rake a rich ladybird into your lap!

But *now*—Doubt

All things out.—

It's a purty mean world, young chap!

It's a purty good world this is, old man—

It's a purty good world this is!

For all its follies and shows and lies—

Its rainy weather, and cheeks likewise,



OUR QUEER OLD WORLD

And age, hard-hearin' and rheumatiz.—  
*We're* not a-faultin' the Lord's own plan—  
All things's jest  
At their best.—  
It's a purty good world, old man!

## THE UNHEARD

### I

ONE in the musical throng  
    Stood forth with his violin;  
And warm was his welcome, and long  
    The later applause and the din.—  
He had uttered, with masterful skill,  
    A melody hailed of men;  
And his own blood leapt a-thrill,  
    As they thundered again.

### II

Another stood forth.—And a rose  
    Bloomed in her hair—likewise  
One at her tremulous throat—  
    And a *rapture* bloomed in her eyes.  
Tempests of cheers upon cheers,  
    Praises to last a life long;  
Roses in showers of tears—  
    All for her song.

## THE UNHEARD

### III

One sat apart and alone,  
Her lips clasped close and straight,  
Uttering never a tone  
That the World might hear, elate—  
Uttering never a low  
Murmurous verse nor a part  
Of the veriest song—But O  
The song in her heart!



## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

*SING!*

*Sing as you will, O singers all  
Who sing because you want to sing!  
Sing! robin on the garden-wall  
Or redbird by the woodland spring:  
Sing! every bird on every bough—  
Sing! every living, loving thing—  
Sing any song, and anyhow,  
But sing! Sing! Sing!*

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

HEIGH-O! our jolly tilts at New World song!—  
What was the poem indeed! and where the bard—  
“Stabbing his inkpot ever, not his heart,”  
As Hector phrased it contumeliously,  
Mouthing and munching, at the orchard-stile,  
A water-cored rambo whose spirited juice  
Glanced, sprayed and flecked the sunlight as he mouth'd  
And muncht, and muncht and mouth'd. All loved the  
man!

“Our Hector” as his *Alma Mater* oozed  
It into utterance—“Old Hec” said we  
Who knew him, hide-and-tallow, hoof-and-horn!  
So he: “O ay! my soul! our New World song—  
The tweedle-deedles of our modern school—  
A school of minnows,—not one gamy bass—  
To hook the angler, not the angler him.  
Here! all ye little fishes: tweedle-dee!  
Soh! one—along the vasty stream of time—

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

Glints to the surface with a gasp,—and, lo,  
A bubble! and he thinks, ‘My eye!—see there,  
Ye little fishes,—there’s a song I’ve sung!’  
Another gapes: another bubble; then  
He thinks: ‘Well, is it not a wondrous art  
To breathe a great immortal poem like that!’  
And then another—and another still—  
And yet another,—till from brim to brim  
The tide is postuled over with a pest  
Of bubbles—bursting bubbles! Ay! O ay!”  
So, bluff old Hec. And we, who knew his mood  
Had ramped its worst—unless we roused it yet  
To ire’s horifficest insanity  
By some inane, unguarded reference  
To “verse beragged in Hoosier dialect”—  
(A strangely unforgotten coinage of  
Old Hec’s, long years ago)—we, so, forbore  
A word, each glimpsing each, as down we sank,  
Couched limply in the orchard’s selvage, where—  
The rambo finished and the soggy core  
Zippt at a sapphire wasp with waist more slim  
Than any slender lady’s, of old wars,  
Pent fasting for long sennights in tall towers  
That overtop the undercringing seas—  
With one accordant voice, the while he creased



## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

His scroll of manuscript, we said, "Go on."  
Then Hector thus:

### AN IDYL OF THE KING

Erewhile, as Autumn, to King Arthur's court  
Came Raelus, clamoring: "Lo, has our house  
Been sacked and pillaged by a lawless band  
Of robber knaves, led on by Alstanés,  
The Night-Flower named, because of her fair face,  
All like a lily gleaming in the dusk  
Of her dark hair—and like a lily brimmed  
With dewy eyes that drip their limpid smiles  
Like poison out, for by them has been wro't  
My elder brother's doom, as much I fear.  
While three days gone was holden harvest-feast  
At Lynion Castle—clinging like a gull  
High up the gray cliffs of Caerleon—  
Came, leaf-like lifted from the plain below  
As by a twisted wind, a rustling pack  
Of bandit pillagers, with Alstanés  
Bright-fluttering like a red leaf in the front.  
And ere we were aware of fell intent—  
Not knowing whether it was friend or foe—  
We found us in their toils, and all the house

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

In place of guests held only prisoners—  
Save that the host, my brother, wro't upon  
By the strange beauty of the robber queen,  
Was left unfettered, but by silken threads  
Of fine-spun flatteries and wanton smiles  
Of the enchantress, till her villain thieves  
Had rifled as they willed and signal given  
To get to horse again. And so they went—  
Their leader flinging backward, as she rode,  
A kiss to my mad brother—mad since then,—  
For from that sorry hour he but talked  
Of Alstanés, and her rare beauty, and  
Her purity—ay, even that he said  
Was star-white, and should light his life with love  
Or leave him groping blindly in its quest  
Thro' all eternity. So, sighing, he  
Went wandering about till set of sun,  
Then got to horse, and bade us all farewell;  
And with his glamoured eyes bent trancedly  
Upon the tumbled sands that marked the way  
The robber-woman went, he turned and chased  
His long black shadow o'er the edge of night."

—So Raelus, all seemingly befret  
With such concern as nipped his utterance

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

In scraps of speech: at which Sir Lancelot,  
Lifting a slow smile to the King, and then  
Turning his cool eye on the youth—"And you  
Would track this siren-robber to her hold  
And rout her rascal followers, and free  
Your brother from the meshes of this queen  
Of hearts—for there you doubtless think him?"

"Ay!"

Foamed Raelus, cheek flushed and eye aflame,—  
"So even have I tracked, and found them, too,  
And know their burrow, shrouded in a copse,  
Where, faring in my brother's quest, I heard  
The nicker of his horse, and followed on,  
And found him tethered in a thicket wild,  
As tangled in its tress of leaf and limb  
As is a madman's hair; and down the path  
That parted it and ran across a knoll  
And dipped again, all suddenly I came  
Upon a cave, wide-yawning 'neath a beard  
Of tangled moss and vine, whence issuing  
I heard, blown o'er my senses faint and clear  
As whiffs of summer wind, my brother's voice  
Lilting a love-song, with the burden tricked  
With dainty warblings of a woman's tongue:  
And even as I listening bent, I heard

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

Such peals of wanton merriment as made  
My own heart flutter as a bird that beats  
For freedom at the bars that prison it.  
So turned I then and fled as one who flies  
To save himself alone—forgetful all  
Of that my dearer self—my brother.—O!”—  
Breaking as sharply as the icy blade  
That loosens from the eave to slice the air  
And splinter into scales of flying frost—  
“Thy help! Thy help! A dozen goodly knights—  
Ay, even that, if so it be their hearts  
Are hungry as my own to right the wrong!”

So Raelus. And Arthur graciously  
Gave ear to him, and, patient, heard him thro’,  
And pitied him, and granted all he asked;  
Then took his hand and held it, saying, “Strong  
And ever stronger may its grasp be knit  
About the sword that flashes in the cause  
Of good.”

Thus Raelus, on the morrow’s front,  
Trapped like a knight and shining like a star,  
Pranced from the archway of the court, and led  
His glittering lances down the gleaming road

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

That river-like ran winding till it slipped  
Out of the palace view and spilled their shields  
Like twinkling bubbles o'er the mountain brim.

Then happed it that as Raelus rode, his tongue  
Kept even pace and cantered ever on  
Right merrily. His brother, as he said,  
Had such an idle soul within his breast—  
Such shallowness of fancy for his heart  
To drift about in—that he well believed  
Its anchor would lay hold on any smile  
The lees of womanhood might offer him.  
As for himself, he loved his brother well,  
Yet had far liefer see him stark and white  
In marble death than that his veins should burn  
With such vitality as spent its flame  
So garishly it knew no steady blaze,  
But ever wavered round as veered the wind  
Of his conceit; for he had made his boast—  
Tho' to his own shame did he speak of it—  
That with a wink he could buy every smile  
That virtue owned. So tattled Raelus  
Till, heated with his theme, he lifted voice  
And sang the song, "The Light of Woman's Eyes!"

“O bright is gleaming morn on mountain height;  
And bright the moon, slipt from its sheath of night,—  
But brighter is the light of woman's eyes.

“And bright the dewdrop, trembling on the lip  
Of some red rose, or lily petal-tip,  
Or lash of pink,—but brighter woman's eyes.

“Bright is the firefly's ever-drifting spark  
That throbs its pulse of light out in the dark;  
And bright the stars,—but brighter woman's eyes.

“Bright morn or even; bright or moon or star,  
And all the many twinkling lights that are,—  
O brighter than ye all are woman's eyes.”

So Raelus sang.—And they who rode with him  
Bewildered were, and even as he sang  
Went straggling, twos and threes, and fell behind  
To whisper wonderingly, “Is he a fool?”  
And “Does he waver in his mind?” and “Does  
The newness of adventure dazzle him?”  
So spake they each to each, till far beyond,  
With but one loathful knight in company,  
They saw him quit the beaten track, and turn

Into the grassy margin of a wood.  
 And loitering, they fell in mocking jest  
 Of their strange leader! "See! why, see!" said one,—  
 "He needs no help to fight his hornets' nest,  
 But one brave knight to squire him!"—pointing on  
 To where fared on the two and disappeared.  
 "O ay!" said one, "belike he is some old  
 War-battered knight of long-forgotten age,  
 That, bursting from his chrysalis, the grave,  
 Comes back to show us tricks we never dreamed!"  
 "Or haply," said another, with a laugh,—  
 "He rides ahead to tell them that he comes  
 And shrive them ere his courage catches up."  
 And merry made they all, and each in turn  
 Fillipped a witty pellet at his head:  
 Until, at last, their shadows shrunk away  
 And shortened 'neath them and the hour was noon,  
 They flung them from their horses listlessly  
 Within the grassy margin of the wood  
 Where had passed Raelus an hour ago:  
 And, hungered, spied a rustic; and they sent  
 To have them such refreshment as might be  
 Found at the nearest farm,—where, as it chanced,  
 Was had most wholesome meat, and milk, and bread;  
 And honey, too, celled in its fretted vase

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

Of gummy gold and dripping nectar-sweet  
As dreamed-of kisses from the lips of love;  
Wine, too, was broughten, rosy as the dawn  
That ushers in the morning of the heart;  
And tawny, mellow pear, whose golden ore  
Fell molten on the tongue and oozed away  
In creamy and delicious nothingness;  
And netted melon, musky as the breath  
Of breezes blown from out the Orient;  
And purple clusterings of plum and grape,  
Blurred with a dust dissolving at the touch  
Like flakes the fairies had snowed over them.  
And as the idlers basked, with toast and song  
And graceful dalliance and wanton jest,  
A sound of trampling hooves and jingling reins  
Brake sudden, stilled them; and from out a dim  
Path leading from the bosky wood there came  
A troop of mounted damsels, nigh a score,  
Led by a queenly girl, in crimson clad,  
With lissome figure lithe and willowy,  
And face as fair and sweet and pure withal  
As might a maiden lily-blossom be  
Ere it has learned the sin of perfect bloom:  
Her hair, blown backward like a silken scarf  
And fondled by the sun, was glossier



And bluer black than any raven's wing.  
 "And O!" she laughed, not knowing she was heard  
 By any but her fellows: "Men are fools!"  
 Then drawing rein, and wheeling suddenly,  
 Her charger mincing backward,— "Raelus—  
 My Raelus is greater than ye all,  
 Since he is such a fool that he forgets  
 He is a man, and lets his tongue of love  
 Run babbling like a silly child's; and, pah!  
 I puff him to the winds like thistle-down!"  
 And, wheeling as she spake, found staring up,  
 Wide-eyed and wondering, a group of knights,  
 Half lifted, as their elbows propped their heads,  
 Half lying; and one, smirker than the rest,  
 Stood bowing very low, with upturned eyes  
 Lit with a twinkling smile: "Fair lady—and  
 Most gracious gentlewomen"—seeing that  
 The others drew them back as tho' abashed  
 And veiled their faces with all modesty,  
 Tho' she, their leader, showed not any qualm,—  
 "Since all unwittingly we overheard  
 Your latest speech, and since we know at last  
 'All men are fools,' right glad indeed am I  
 That such a nest of us remains for you  
 To vanquish with those eyes." Then, serious,

That she nor smiled nor winced, nor anything—  
 “Your pardon will be to me as a shower  
 Of gracious rain unto a panting drouth.”  
 So bowed in humblest reverence; at which  
 The damsel, turning to her followers,  
 Laughed musically,—“See! he proves my words!”  
 Whereat the others joined with inward glee  
 Her pealing mirth; and in the merriment  
 The knights chimed, too, and he, the vanquished one,  
 Till all the wood rang as at hunting-tide  
 When bugle-rumors float about the air  
 And echoes leap and revel in delight.  
 Then spake the vanquished knight, with mental eye  
 Sweeping the vantage-ground that chance had  
 gained,—

“Your further pardon, lady: Since the name  
 Of Raelus fell from those lips of thine,  
 We fain would know of him. He led us here,  
 And as he went the way wherefrom your path  
 Emerges, haply you may tell us where  
 He may be found?”

“What! Raelus?” she cried,—  
 “He comes with you?—The brave Sir Raelus?—  
 That mighty champion?—that gallant knight?—  
 That peerless wonder of all nobleness?”

Then proud am I to greet ye, knowing that;  
 And, certes, had I known of it ere now,  
 Then had I proffered you more courtesy  
 And told you, ere the asking, that he bides  
 The coming of his friends a league from this,  
 Hard by a reedy mere, where in high tune  
 We left him singing, nigh an hour ago."  
 Then, as she lightly wheeled her horse about  
 And signal gave to her companions  
 To follow, gayly cried: "Tell Raelus  
 His cousin sends to him her sad farewells  
 And fond regrets, and kisses many as  
 His valorous deeds are numbered in her heart."  
 And with "Fair morrow to ye, gentle knights!"  
 Her steed's hooves struck the highway at a bound;  
 And dimly thro' the dust they saw her lead  
 Her fluttering cavalcade as recklessly  
 As might a queen of Araby, fleet-horsed,  
 Skim o'er the level sands of Syria.  
 So vanished. And the knights with one accord  
 Put foot in stirrup, and, with puzzled minds  
 And many-channelled marvellings, filed in  
 The woody path, and fared them on and on  
 Thro' denser glooms, and ways more intricate;  
 Till, mystified at last and wholly lost,

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

They made full halt, and would have turned them  
back

But that a sudden voice brake on their ears  
All piteous and wailing, as distressed:  
And, following these cries, they sharply came  
Upon an open road that circled round  
A reedy flat and sodden tract of sedge,  
Moated with stagnant water, crusted thick  
With slimy moss, wherein were wriggling things  
Entangled, and blind bubbles bulging up  
And bursting where from middle way upshot  
A tree-trunk, with its knarled and warty hands  
As tho' upheld to clutch at sliding snakes  
Or nip the wet wings of the dragon-fly.  
Here gazing, lo! they saw their comrade, he  
That had gone on with Raelus; and he  
Was tugging to fling back into its place  
A heavy log that once had spanned the pool  
And made a footway to the sedgy flat  
Whence came the bitter wailing cries they heard.  
Then hastened they to join him in his task;  
But, panting, as they asked of Raelus,  
All winded with his work, yet jollier  
Than meadow-lark at morn, he sent his voice  
In such a twittering of merriment,

The wail of sorrow died and laughter strewed  
Its grave with melody.

“O Raelus!

Rare Raelus!” he cried and clapped his hands,  
And even in the weeds that edged the pool  
Fell wrestling with his mirth.—“Why, Raelus,”  
He said, when he at last could speak again,  
“Drew magnet-like—you know that talk of his,—  
And so, adhesive, did I cling and cling  
Until I found us in your far advance,  
And, hidden in the wood, I stayed to say  
’Twas better we should bide your coming. ‘No.’  
Then on again; and still a second time—  
‘Shall we not bide their coming?’ ‘No!’ he said;  
And on again, until the third; and ‘No—  
We’ll push a little further.’ As we did;  
And, sudden, came upon an open glade—  
There to the northward,—by a thicket bound:  
Then he dismounted, giving me his rein,  
And, charging me to keep myself concealed,  
And if he were not back a certain time  
To ride for you and search where he had gone,  
He crossed the opening and passed from sight  
Within the thicket. I was curious:  
And so, dismounting, tethered our two steeds

And followed him; and, creeping warily,  
 Came on him where—unseen of him—I saw  
 Him pause before the cave himself described  
 Before us yesternoon. And here he put  
 His fingers to his lips and gave a call  
 Bird-like and quavering: at which a face,  
 As radiant as summer sun at morn,  
 Parted the viny curtains of the cave;  
 And then, a moment later, came in view  
 A woman even fairer than my sight  
 Might understand. ‘What! dare you come again?’  
 As, lifting up her eyes all flashingly,  
 She scorched him with a look of hate.—‘Begone!  
 Or have you—traitor, villain, knave, and cur,—  
 Bro’t minions of the law to carry out  
 The vengeance of your whimpering jealousy?’  
 Then Raelus, all cowering before  
 Her queenly anger, faltered: ‘Hear me yet;  
 I do not threaten. But your love—your love!—  
 O give me that. I know you pure as dew:  
 Your love! Your love!—The smile that has gone out  
 And left my soul a midnight of despair!—  
 Your love or life! For I have even now  
 Your stronghold girt about with certain doom  
 If you but waver in your choice.—Your love!’

At which, as quick as tho't, leapt on him there  
 A strong man from the covert of the gloom;  
 And others, like to him, from here and there  
 Came skurrying. I, turning, would have fled,  
 But found myself as suddenly beset  
 And tied and tumbled there with Raelus.  
 And him they haltered by his squirming heels  
 Until he did confess such villainy  
 As made me wonder if his wits were sound—  
 Confessed himself a renegade—a thief—  
 Ay, even one of them, save that he knew  
 Not that nice honor even thieves may claim  
 Among themselves.—And so ran on thro' such  
 A catalogue of littlenesses, I  
 For deafest shame had even stopped my ears  
 But that my wrists were lockt. And when he came  
 To his confession of his lie at court,  
 By which was gained our knightly sympathy  
 And valiant service on this fools' crusade,  
 I seemed to feel the redness of my blush  
 Soak thro' my very soul. There I brake in:  
 'Fair lady and most gallant,—to my shame  
 Do I admit we have been duped by such  
 An ingrate as this bundled lump of flesh  
 That I am helpless to rise up and spurn:

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

Unbind me, and I promise such amends  
As knightly hands may deign to wreak upon  
A thing so vile as he.' Then, laughing, she:  
'First tell me, by your honor, where await  
Your knightly brothers and my enemies.'  
To which I answered, truthfully, I knew  
Not where you lingered, but not close at hand  
I was assured. Then all abrupt, she turned:  
'Get every one within! We ride at once!'  
And scarce a dozen minutes ere they came  
Outpouring from the cave in such a guise  
As made me smile from very wonderment.—  
From head to heel in woman's dress they came,  
Clad richly, too, and trapped and tricked withal  
As maidenly, but in the face and hand,  
As ever damsels flock at holiday.  
Then were their chargers bro't, caparisoned  
In keeping; and they mounted, lifting us,  
Still bounden, with much jest and mockery  
Of soft caress and wanton blandishments,  
As tho' they were of sex their dress declared.  
And so they carried us until they came  
Upon the road there as it nicks the copse;  
And so drew rein, dismounted, leaving some  
To guard their horses; hurried us across



## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

This footway to the middle of the flat.  
Here Raelus was bounden to a tree,  
Stript to the waist; my fetters cut, and then  
A long, keen switch put in my hand, and 'Strike!  
Strike as all duty bids you!' said the queen.  
And so I did, with right good will at first;  
Till, softened as I heard the wretch's prayers  
Of anguish, I at last withheld my hand.  
'What! tiring?' chirpt the queen: 'Give me the  
stick!'  
And swish, and swish, and mercy how it rained!  
Then all the others, forming circlewise,  
Danced round and round the howling wretch,  
and jeered  
And japed at him, and mocked and scoffed at him,  
And spat upon him. And I turned away  
And hid my face; then raised it pleadingly:  
Nor would they listen my appeal for him;  
But left him so, and thonged and took me back  
Across the mere, and drew the bridge, that none  
Might go to him, and carried me with them  
Far on their way, and freed me once again;  
And back I turned, tho' loath, to succor him."  
And even as he ceased they heard the wail  
Break out anew, and crossed without a word,

## OLD HEC'S IDOLATRY

And Raelus they found, and without word  
They loosed him. And he brake away and ran  
As runs a lie the truth is hard upon.

Thus did it fare with Raelus. And they  
Who knew of it said naught at court of it,  
Nor from that day spake ever of him once,  
Nor heard of him again, nor cared to hear.

## THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

I've allus held—till jest of late—  
That *Poetry* and me  
Got on best, not to 'sociate—  
That is, *most* poetry;  
But t'other day my *son-in-law*,  
Milt—be'n in town to mill—  
Fetched home a present-like, fer Ma,—  
The Rhymes of Ironquill.

Milt ust to teach; and, 'course, *his* views  
Ranks over *common* sense;—  
That's *biassed* me, till I refuse  
'Most all he rickommends.—  
But Ma *she* read and read along,  
And cried, like women will,  
About that "Washerwoman's Song"  
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

## THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

And then she made *me* read the thing,  
And found my specs and all:  
And I jest leant back there—i jing!—  
My cheer ag'inst the wall—  
And read and *read*, and read and *read*,  
All to myse'f—ontil  
I lit the lamp and went to bed  
With Rhymes of Ironquill!

I propped myse'f up there, and—*durn*!—  
I never shet an eye  
Till daylight!—hogged the whole concern  
Tee-total, mighty nigh!—  
I'd sigh sometimes, and cry sometimes,  
Er laugh jest fit to kill—  
Clean *captured*-like with them-air rhymes  
O' that-air Ironquill!

Read that-un 'bout old "Marmaton"  
'At hain't be'n ever "sized"  
In Song before—and yit's rolled on  
Jest same as 'postrophized!—  
Putt me in mind o' *our* old crick  
At *Freeport*—and the *mill*—  
And Hinchman's Ford—till jest *homesick*—  
Them Rhymes of Ironquill!

THE RHYMES OF IRONQUILL

Read that-un, too, 'bout "Game o' Whist,"  
And likenin' Life to fun  
Like *that*—and playin' out yer fist,  
However cards is run:  
And them "Tobacker-Stemmers' Song"  
They sung with sich a will  
Down 'mongst the misery and wrong—  
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

And old John Brown, who broke the sod  
Of Freedom's faller field  
And sowed his *heart* there, thankin' God  
Pore slaves would git the yield—  
Rained his last tears fer them and *us*  
To irrigate and till  
A crop of Song as glorious  
As Rhymes of Ironquill.

And—sergeant, died there in the War,  
'At talked, out of his head . . .  
He went "back to the Violet Star,"  
I'll bet—jest like he said!—  
Yer Wars kin riddle bone and flesh,  
And blow out brains, and spill  
Life-blood, —but *Somepin'* lives on, fresh  
As Rhymes of Ironquill!

## THE BAN

### I

STRANGE dreams of what I used to be,  
And what I dreamed I *would* be, swim  
Before my vision, faint and dim  
As misty distances we see  
In pictured scenes of fairy-lands;  
And ever on, with empty hands,  
And eyes that ever lie to me,  
And smiles that no one understands,  
I grope adown my destiny.

### II

Some say I waver as I walk  
Along the crowded thoroughfares;  
And some leer in my eyes, and talk  
Of dulness, while I see in theirs—

## THE BAN

Like fishes eyes, alive or dead—  
But surfaces of vacancy—  
Blank disks that never seem to see,  
But glint and glow and glare instead.

### III

The ragged shawl I wear is wet  
With driving, dripping rains, and yet  
It seems a royal raiment, where,  
Through twisted torrents of my hair,  
I see rare gems that gleam and shine  
Like jewels in a stream of wine;  
The gaping shoes that clothe my feet  
Are golden sandals, and the shrine  
Where courtiers grovel and repeat  
Vain prayers, and where, in joy thereat,  
A fair Prince doffs his plumèd hat,  
And kneels, and names me all things sweet.

### iv

Sometimes the sun shines, and the lull  
Of winter noon is like a tune  
The stars might twinkle to the moon  
If night were white and beautiful—

## THE BAN

For when the clangor of the town  
And strife of traffic softens down,  
The wakeful hunger that I nurse,  
In listening, forgets to curse,  
Until—ah, joy! with drooping head  
I drowse, and dream that I am dead  
And buried safe beyond their eyes  
Who either pity or despise.



## EQUITY—?

THE meanest man I ever saw  
Allus kep' inside o' the law;  
And ten-times better fellers I've knowed  
The blame' gran'-jury's sent over the road.

## THE SMITTEN PURIST

AND THE CHARMING MISS SMITH'S EFFECT UPON HIM

THWEET Poethy! let me *lithp* forethwith,  
That I may thhing of the name of Smith—  
Which name, alath!  
In Harmony hath  
No adequate rhyme, leht you grant me thith,—  
That the thimple thibillant thound of *eth*—  
(Which to thave my thoul, I can not expreth!)  
Thuth I may thhingingly,  
Wooing and winningly  
Thu—thu—thound in the name of Smith.

O give me a name that will rhyme with Smith,—  
For wild and weird ath the sthrange name ith,  
I would sthrangle a sthrain  
And a thad refrain  
Faint and sthweet ath a whithpered kissth;  
I would thhing thome thong for the mythtic mitth

THE SMITTEN PURIST

Who beareth the thingular name of Smith—  
The dathzlingly brilli-ant,  
Rarely rethilliant  
Ap—pup—pellation of Smith!

O had I a name that would rhyme with Smith—  
Thome rhythmical tincture of rethonant blith—  
Thome melody rare  
Ath the cherubth blare  
On them little trumpeths they're foolin' with—  
I would thit me down, and I'd thhing like thith  
Of the girl of the thingular name of Smith—  
The sthrangely curiouth,  
Rich and luxuriouth  
Pup—patronymic of Smith!

## IN THE EVENING

### I

IN the evening of our days,  
When the first far stars above  
Glimmer dimmer, through the haze,  
Than the dewy eyes of love,  
Shall we mournfully revert  
To the vanished morns and Mays  
Of our youth, with hearts that hurt,—  
In the evening of our days?

### II

Shall the hand that holds your own  
Till the twain are thrilled as now,—  
Be withheld, or colder grown?  
Shall my kiss upon your brow  
Falter from its high estate?  
And, in all forgetful ways,  
Shall we sit apart and wait—  
In the evening of our days?

## IN THE EVENING

### III

Nay, my wife—my life!—the gloom  
    Shall enfold us velvetwise,  
And my smile shall be the groom  
    Of the gladness of your eyes:  
Gently, gently as the dew  
    Mingles with the darkening maze,  
I shall fall asleep with you—  
    In the evening of our days.

## MOONSHINER'S SERENADE

THE night's blind-black, an' I 'low the stars's  
All skeered at that-air dog's bow-wows!  
I sensed the woods-road, clumb the bars,  
An' arrove here, tromplin' over cows.  
The mist hangs thick enough to cut,  
But there's her light a-glimmerin' through  
The mornin'-glories, twisted shut—  
An' shorely there's her shadder too!

*Ho! hit's good night,  
My Beauty-Bright!  
The moon cain't match your can'le-light—  
Your can'le-light with you cain't shine,  
Lau-ree! Lady-love! tiptoe-fine!*

Oomh! how them roses soaks the air!—  
Thess drenched with mist an' renched with  
dew!

MOONSHINER'S SERENADE

They's a smell o' plums, too, 'round somewhere—  
An' I kin smell ripe apples, too.  
Mix all them sweet things into one,—  
Yer roses, fruit, an' flower an' vine,  
Yit I'll say, "No, I don't choose none,  
Ef I kin git that gal of mine!"

*Ho! hit's good night,  
My Beauty-Bright!  
Primp a while, an' blow out the light—  
Putt me in your prayers, an' then  
I'll be twic't as good-again!*

## THE SILENT SINGER

MRS. D. M. JORDAN, APRIL 29, 1895

ALL sudden she hath ceased to sing,  
Hushed in eternal slumbering,  
And we make moan that she is dead.—  
Nay; peace! be comforted.

Between her singing and her tears  
She pauses, listening—and she hears  
The Song we cannot hear.—And thus  
She mutely pities us.

Could she speak out, we doubt not she  
Would turn to us full tenderly,  
And in the old melodious voice  
Say: “Weep not, but rejoice.”

Ay, musical as waters run  
In woodland rills through shade and sun,



## THE SILENT SINGER

The sweet voice would flow on and say,—

“Be glad with me to-day.—

“Your Earth was very dear and fair  
To me—the groves and grasses there;  
The bursting buds and blossoms—O  
I always loved them so!—

“The very dews within them seemed  
Reflected by mine eyes and gleamed  
Adown my cheeks in what you knew  
As ‘tears,’ and not as dew.

“Your birds, too, in the orchard-boughs—  
I could not hear them from the house,  
But I must leave my work and stray  
Out in the open day

“And the illimitable range  
Of their vast freedom—always strange  
And new to me—It pierced my heart  
With sweetness as a dart!—

“The singing! singing! singing!—All  
The trees bloomed blossoms musical  
That chirped and trilled in colors till  
My whole soul seemed to fill

## THE SILENT SINGER

“To overflow with music, so  
That I have found me kneeling low  
Midst the lush grass, with murmurous words  
Thanking the flowers and birds.

“So with the ones to me most dear—  
I loved them, as I love them Here:  
Bear with my memory, therefore,  
As when in days of yore,

“O friends of mine, ye praised the note  
Of some song, quavering from my throat  
Out of the overstress of love  
And all the pain thereof.

“And ye, too, do I love with this  
Same love—and Heaven knows all it is,—  
The birds’ song in it—bud and bloom—  
The turf, but not the tomb.”

Between her singing and her tears  
She pauses, listening—and she hears  
The Song we cannot hear.—And thus  
She mutely pities us

## A PEACE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

LOUISVILLE, KY., SEPTEMBER 12, 1895:  
29TH ENCAMPMENT, G. A. R.

THERE'S a Voice across the Nation like a mighty ocean-hail,  
Borne up from out the Southward as the seas before  
the gale;  
Its breath is in the streaming Flag and in the flying  
sail—

As we go sailing on.

'Tis a Voice that we remember—ere its summons  
soothed as now—  
When it rang in battle-challenge, and we answered  
vow with vow,—  
With roar of gun and hiss of sword and crash of prow  
and prow,

As we went sailing on.

A PEACE-HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC

Our hope sank, even as we saw the sun sink faint and  
far,—

The Ship of State went groping through the blinding  
smoke of War—

Through blackest midnight lurching, all uncheered of  
moon or star,

Yet sailing—sailing on.

As One who spake the dead awake, with life-blood leap-  
ing warm—

Who walked the troubled waters, all unscathed, in  
mortal form,—

We felt our Pilot's presence with His hand upon the  
storm,

As we went sailing on.

O Voice of passion lulled to peace, this dawning of To-  
day—

O Voices twain now blent as one, ye sing all fears  
away,

Since foe and foe are friends, and lo! the Lord, as glad  
as they.—

He sends us sailing on.

## ONE WITH A SONG

FRANK L. STANTON

HE sings: and his song is heard,  
Pure as a joyous prayer,  
Because he sings of the simple things—  
The fields, and the open air,  
The orchard-bough, and the mockingbird,  
And the blossoms everywhere.

He sings of a wealth we hold  
In common ownership—  
The wildwood nook, and the laugh of the brook,  
And the dewdrop's drip and drip,  
The love of the lily's heart of gold,  
And the kiss of the rose's lip.

The universal heart  
Leans listening to his lay  
That glints and gleams with the glimmering dreams  
Of children at their play—  
A lay as rich with unconscious art  
As the first song-bird's of May.

## ONE WITH A SONG

Ours every rapturous tone  
Of every song of glee,  
Because his voice makes native choice  
Of Nature's harmony—  
So that his singing seems our own,  
And ours his ecstasy.

Steadfastly, bravely glad  
Above all earthly stress,  
He lifts his line to heights divine,  
And, singing, ever says,—  
This is a better world than bad—  
God's love is limitless.

He sings: and his song is heard,  
Pure as a joyous prayer,  
Because he sings of the simple things—  
The fields, and the open air,  
The orchard-bough, and the mockingbird,  
And the blossoms everywhere.

## MR. FOLEY'S CHRISTMAS

*There's nothing sweet in the city  
But the patient lives of the poor.*

JOHN BOYLE O'REILLY.

### I

SINCE pick av them I'm sore denied  
    'Twixt play or work, I say,  
Though it be Christmas, I decide  
    I'll work whilst others play:  
I'll whustle, too, wid Christmas pride  
    To airn me extry pay.—  
It's like the job's more glorified  
    That's done a-holiday!

Dan, dip a coal in dad's pipe-bowl;  
    Kate, pass me dinner-can:  
Och! Mary woman, save yer sowl,  
    Ye've kissed a workin'-man—  
Ye have, this Christmas mornin',  
    Ye've kissed a workin'-man!

## MR. FOLEY'S CHRISTMAS

### II

Whisht, Kate an' Dan!—ten thousan' grates  
There's yon where ne'er a charm  
Av childer-faces sanctuates  
The city-homes from harm:  
It's cold out there the weather waits  
An' bitter whirls the storm,  
But, faith! these arms av little Kate's  
'Ll kape her fayther warm!

Ay, Danny, tight me belt a mite,—  
Kate, aisy wid the can!—  
Sure, I'd be comin' home to-night  
A hungry workin'-man—  
D'ye moind, this Christmas avenin'—  
A howlin'-hungry man!

### III

It's sorry for the boss I be,  
Wid new contracts to sign  
An' hire a sub to oversee  
Whilst he lave off an' dine:  
It's sorry for the Company  
That owns the Aarie Line—  
What vasht raasponsibility  
They have, compared wid mine!



MR. FOLEY'S CHRISTMAS

There, Katy! git me t'other mitt,  
An' fetch me yon from Dan—  
(Wid aich one's "Christmas" hid in it!)  
Lave go me dinner-can!—  
Ye'll have me docked this mornin'—  
This blessed Christmas mornin',—  
A dishgraced workin'-man!

## THE PATHS OF PEACE

MAURICE THOMPSON — FEBRUARY 14, 1901

HE would have holiday—outworn, in sooth,  
    Would turn again to seek the old release,—  
The open fields—the loved haunts of his youth—  
    The woods, the waters, and the paths of peace.

The rest—the recreation he would choose  
    Be his abidingly! Long has he served  
And greatly—ay, and greatly let us use  
    Our grief, and yield him nobly as deserved.

Perchance—with subtler senses than our own  
    And love exceeding ours—he listens thus  
To ever nearer, clearer pipings blown  
    From out the lost lands of Theocritus.

Or, haply, he is beckoned from us here,  
    By knight or yeoman of the bosky wood,  
Or, chained in roses, haled a prisoner  
    Before the blithe Immortal, Robin Hood.

## THE PATHS OF PEACE

Or, mayhap, Chaucer signals, and with him  
And his rare fellows he goes pilgriming;  
Or Walton signs him, o'er the morning brim  
Of misty waters midst the dales of Spring.

Ho! wheresoe'er he goes, or whosoe'er  
He fares with, he has bravely earned the boon.  
Be his the open, and the glory there  
Of April-buds, May-blooms and flowers of June!

Be his the glittering dawn, the twinkling dew,  
The breathless pool or gush of laughing streams—  
Be his the triumph of the coming true  
Of all his loveliest dreams!

## AN OLD FRIEND

HEY, Old Midsummer! are you here again,  
    With all your harvest-store of olden joys,—  
Vast overhanging meadow-lands of rain,  
And drowsy dawns, and noons when golden grain  
    Nods in the sun, and lazy truant boys  
Drift ever listlessly adown the day,  
Too full of joy to rest, and dreams to play.

The same old Summer, with the same old smile  
    Beaming upon us in the same old way  
We knew in childhood! Though a weary while  
Since that far time, yet memories reconcile  
    The heart with odorous breaths of clover-hay;  
And again I hear the doves, and the sun streams  
    through  
The old barn-door just as it used to do.

And so it seems like welcoming a friend—  
    An old, *old* friend, upon his coming home

AN OLD FRIEND

From some far country—coming home to spend  
Long, loitering days with me: And I extend  
My hand in rapturous glee:—And so you've come!—  
Ho, I'm so glad! Come in and take a chair:  
Well, this is just like *old* times, I declare!



## WHAT THE WIND SAID

,

### *THE EDGE OF THE WIND*

*Ye stars in ye skies seem twinkling  
In icicles of light,  
And ye edge of ye wind cuts keener  
Than ever ye sword-edge might ;  
Ye footsteps crunch in ye courtway,  
And ye trough and ye cask go "ping!"—  
Ye china cracks in ye pantry,  
And ye crickets cease to sing.*



## WHAT THE WIND SAID

*I muse to-day, in a listless way,  
In the gleam of a summer land ;  
I close my eyes as a lover may  
At the touch of his sweetheart's hand,  
And I hear these things in the whisperings  
Of the zephyrs 'round me fanned :—*

I am the Wind, and I rule mankind,  
And I hold a sovereign reign  
Over the lands, as God designed,  
And the waters they contain:  
Lo! the bound of the wide world round  
Falleth in my domain!

I was born on a stormy morn  
In a kingdom walled with snow,  
Whose crystal cities laugh to scorn  
The proudest the world can show;  
And the daylight's glare is frozen there  
In the breath of the blasts that blow.

## WHAT THE WIND SAID

Life to me was a jubilee

From the first of my youthful days:  
Clinking my icy toys with glee—  
Playing my childish plays;  
Filling my hands with the silver sands  
To scatter a thousand ways:

Chasing the flakes that the Polar shakes  
From his shaggy coat of white,  
Or hunting the trace of the track he makes  
And sweeping it from sight,  
As he turned to glare from the slippery stair  
Of the iceberg's farthest height.

Till I grew so strong that I strayed ere long  
From my home of ice and chill;  
With an eager heart and a merry song  
I travelled the snows until  
I heard the thaws in the ice-crag's jaws  
Crunched with a hungry will;

And the angry crash of the waves that dash  
Themselves on the jagged shore  
Where the splintered masts of the ice-wrecks flash,  
And the frightened breakers roar

## WHAT THE WIND SAID

In wild unrest on the ocean's breast  
For a thousand leagues or more.

And the grand old sea invited me  
With a million beckoning hands,  
And I spread my wings for a flight as free  
As ever a sailor plans  
When his thoughts are wild and his heart beguiled  
With the dreams of foreign lands.

I passed a ship on its homeward trip,  
With a weary and toil-worn crew ;  
And I kissed their flag with a welcome lip,  
And so glad a gale I blew  
That the sailors quaffed their grog and laughed  
At the work I made them do.

I drifted by where sea-groves lie  
Like brides in the fond caress  
Of the warm sunshine and the tender sky—  
Where the ocean, passionless  
And tranquil, lies like a child whose eyes  
Are blurred with drowsiness.

I drank the air and the perfume there,  
And bathed in a fountain's spray;

## WHAT THE WIND SAID

And I smoothed the wings and the plumage rare  
Of a bird for his roundelay,  
And fluttered a rag from a signal-crag  
For a wretched castaway.

With a sea-gull resting on my breast,  
I launched on a madder flight:  
And I lashed the waves to a wild unrest,  
And howled with a fierce delight  
Till the daylight slept; and I wailed and wept  
Like a fretful babe all night.

For I heard the boom of a gun strike doom;  
And the gleam of a blood-red star  
Glared at me through the mirk and gloom  
From the lighthouse tower afar;  
And I held my breath at the shriek of death  
That came from the harbor bar.

For I am the Wind, and I rule mankind,  
And I hold a sovereign reign  
Over the lands, as God designed,  
And the waters they contain:  
Lo! the bound of the wide world round  
Falleth in my domain!

## WHAT THE WIND SAID

I journeyed on, when the night was gone,  
O'er a coast of oak and pine;  
And I followed a path that a stream had drawn  
Through a land of vale and vine,  
And here and there was a village fair  
In a nest of shade and shine.

I passed o'er lakes where the sunshine shakes  
And shivers his golden lance  
On the glittering shield of the wave that breaks  
Where the fish-boats dip and dance,  
And the trader sails where the mist unveils  
The glory of old romance.

I joyed to stand where the jewelled hand  
Of the maiden-morning lies  
On the tawny brow of the mountain-land,  
Where the eagle shrieks and cries,  
And holds his throne to himself alone  
From the light of human eyes.

Adown deep glades where the forest shades  
Are dim as the dusk of day—  
Where only the foot of the wild beast wades,  
Or the Indian dares to stray,

## WHAT THE WIND SAID

As the blacksnakes glide through the reeds and hide  
In the swamp-depths grim and gray.

And I turned and fled from the place of dread  
To the far-off haunts of men.

“In the city’s heart is rest,” I said,—

But I found it not, and when  
I saw but care and vice reign there  
I was filled with wrath again:

And I blew a spark in the midnight dark

Till it flashed to an angry flame  
And scarred the sky with a lurid mark

As red as the blush of shame:  
And a hint of hell was the dying yell  
That up from the ruins came.

The bells went wild, and the black smoke piled

Its pillars against the night,  
Till I gathered them, like flocks defiled,  
And scattered them left and right,  
While the holocaust’s red tresses tossed  
As a maddened Fury’s might.

“Ye overthrown!” did I jeer and groan—

“Ho! who is your master?—say!—

## WHAT THE WIND SAID

Ye shapes that writhe in the slag and moan  
Your slow-charred souls away—  
Ye worse than worst of things accurst—  
Ye dead leaves of a day!”

I am the Wind, and I rule mankind,  
And I hold a sovereign reign  
Over the lands, as God designed,  
And the waters they contain:  
Lo! the bound of the wide world round  
Falleth in my domain!

. . . . .  
*I wake, as one from a dream half done,  
And gaze with a dazzled eye  
On an autumn leaf like a scrap of sun  
That the wind goes whirling by,  
While afar I hear, with a chill of fear,  
The winter storm-king sigh.*

## THE NOBLEST SERVICE

DR. WYCKLIFFE SMITH, LATE SURGEON 161ST REGIMENT  
INDIANA VOLUNTEERS, DELPHI, DECEMBER 29, 1899

If all his mourning friends unselfishly  
Might speak, high over grief, in one accord,  
What voice of joy were lifted to the Lord  
For having lent our need such ministry  
As this man's life has ever proved to be!  
Yea, even through battle-crash of gun and sword  
His steadfast step still found the pathway toward  
The noblest service paid Humanity.  
O ye to whose rich firesides he has brought  
A richer light! O watcher at the door  
Of the lone cabin! O kindred! Comrades!—all!  
Since universal good he dreamed and wrought,  
Be brave, to pleasure him, as, on before,  
He leads us, answering Glory's highest call.



## THE OLD GUITAR

NEGLECTED now is the old guitar  
And mouldering into decay;  
Fretted with many a rift and scar  
That the dull dust hides away,  
While the spider spins a silver star  
In its silent lips to-day.

The keys hold only nerveless strings—  
The sinews of brave old airs  
Are pulseless now; and the scarf that clings  
So closely here declares  
A sad regret in its ravellings  
And the faded hue it wears.

But the old guitar, with a lenient grace.  
Has cherished a smile for me;  
And its features hint of a fairer face  
That comes with a memory  
Of a flower-and-perfume-haunted place  
And a moonlit balcony.

## THE OLD GUITAR

Music sweeter than words confess,  
Or the minstrel's powers invent,  
Thrilled here once at the light caress  
Of the fairy hands that lent  
This excuse for the kiss I press  
On the dear old instrument.

The rose of pearl with the jewelled stem  
Still blooms; and the tiny sets  
In the circle all are here; the gem  
In the keys, and the silver frets;  
But the dainty fingers that danced o'er them—  
Alas for the heart's regrets!—

Alas for the loosened strings to-day,  
And the wounds of rift and scar  
On a worn old heart, with its roundelay  
Enthralled with a stronger bar  
That Fate weaves on, through a dull decay  
Like that of the old guitar!

## AN IDIOT

I'M on'y thist a' idiot—  
That's what folks calls a feller what  
Ain't got no mind  
Of any kind,  
Ner don't know nothin' he's forgot.—  
I'm one o' *them*—But I know why  
The bees buzz *this* way when they fly,—  
'Cause honey it gits on their wings.  
Ain't thumbs and fingers funny things?

What's money? Hooh! it's thist a hole  
Punched in a round thing 'at won't roll  
'Cause they's a string  
Poked through the thing  
And fastened round your neck—that's all!  
Ef I could git my money off,  
I'd buy whole lots o' whoopin'-cough  
And give it to the boy next door  
Who died 'cause he ain't got no more.

AN IDIOT

What is it when you die? *I* know,—  
You can't wake up ag'in, ner go  
To sleep no more—  
Ner kick, ner snore,  
Ner lay and look and watch it snow;  
And when folks slaps and pinches you—  
You don't keer nothin' *what* they do.  
No honey on the *angels'* wings!  
Ain't thumbs and fingers funny things?

## THE ENDURING

A MISTY memory—faint, far away  
And vague and dim as childhood's long-lost day—  
Forever haunts and holds me with a spell  
Of awe and wonder indefinable:—  
A grimy old engraving tacked upon  
A shoe-shop wall.—An ancient temple, drawn  
Of crumbling granite, sagging portico,  
And gray, forbidding gateway, grim as woe;  
And o'er the portal, cut in antique line,  
The words—cut likewise in this brain of mine—

“Wouldst have a friend?—Wouldst know what  
friend is best?

Have GOD thy friend: He passeth all the rest.”

Again the old shoemaker pounds and pounds  
Resentfully, as the loud laugh resounds  
And the coarse jest is bandied round the throng  
That smokes about the smouldering stove; and long,

## THE ENDURING

Tempestuous disputes arise, and then—  
Even as all like discords—die again;  
The while a barefoot boy more gravely heeds  
The quaint old picture, and tiptoeing reads  
There in the rainy gloom the legend o'er  
The lowering portal of the old church door—  
“Wouldst have a friend?—Wouldst know what  
friend is best?  
Have GOD thy friend: He passeth all the rest.”

So older—older—older, year by year,  
The boy has grown, that now, an old man here,  
He seems a part of Allegory, where  
He stands before Life as the old print there—  
Still awed, and marvelling what light must be  
Hid by the door that bars Futurity:—  
Though, ever clearer than with eyes of youth,  
He reads with his *old* eyes—and tears forsooth—  
“Wouldst have a friend?—Wouldst know what  
friend is best?  
Have GOD thy friend: He passeth all the rest.”

## THE HIRED MAN'S FAITH IN CHILDREN

I BELIEVE *all* childern's good,  
Ef they're only *understood*,—  
Even *bad* ones, 'pears to me,  
'S jest as good as they kin be!

## THE NATURALIST

OLIVER DAVIE

IN gentlest worship has he bowed  
To Nature. Rescued from the crowd  
And din of town and thoroughfare,  
He turns him from all worldly care  
Unto the sacred fastness of  
The forests, and the peace and love  
That breathes there prayer-like in the breeze  
And coo of doves in dreamful trees—  
Their tops in laps of sunshine laid,  
Their lower boughs all slaked with shade.

With head uncovered has he stood,  
Hearing the Spirit of the Wood—  
Hearing aright the Master speak  
In trill of bird, and warbling creek;  
In lisp of reeds, or rainy sigh  
Of grasses as the loon darts by—



## THE NATURALIST

Hearing aright the storm and lull,  
And all earth's voices wonderful,—  
Even this hail an unknown friend  
Lifts will he hear and comprehend.

## AT CROWN HILL

LEAVE him here in the fresh greening grasses and  
trees

And the symbols of love, and the solace of these—  
The saintly white lilies and blossoms he keeps  
In endless caress as he breathlessly sleeps.  
The tears of our eyes wrong the scene of his rest,  
For the sky's at its clearest—the sun's at its best—  
The earth at its greenest—its wild bud-and-bloom  
At its sweetest—and sweetest its honey'd perfume.

Home! home!—Leave him here in his lordly estate,  
And with never a tear as we turn from the gate!

Turn back to the home that will know him no more,—  
The vines at the window—the sun through the door.—  
Nor sound of his voice, nor the light of his face! . . .  
But the birds will sing on, and the rose, in his place,  
Will tenderly smile till we daringly feign  
He is home with us still, though the tremulous rain

AT CROWN HILL

Of our tears reappear, and again all is gloom,  
And all prayerless we sob in the long-darkened room.

Heaven portions it thus—the old mystery dim,—  
It is midnight to us—it is morning to him.

## THE BED

### I

“ THOU, of all God’s gifts the best,  
Blessèd Bed!” I muse, and rest  
Thinking how it havened me  
In my dazèd Infancy—  
Ere mine eyes could bear the kind  
Daylight through the window-blind,  
Or my lips, in yearning quest,  
Groping found the mother-breast,  
Or mine utterance but owned  
Minor sounds that sobbed and moaned.

### II

Gracious Bed that nestled me  
Even ere the mother’s knee,—  
Lulling me to slumber ere  
Conscious of my treasure there—

## THE BED

Save the tiny palms that kept  
Fondling, even as I slept,  
That rare dual-wealth of mine,—  
Softest pillow—sweetest wine!—  
Gentlest cheer for mortal guest,  
And of Love's fare lordliest.

### III

By thy grace, O Bed, the first  
Blooms of Boyhood-memories burst:—  
Dreams of riches, swift withdrawn  
As I, wakening, find the dawn  
With its glad Spring-face once more  
Glimmering on me as of yore:  
Then the bluebird's limpid cry  
Lulls me like a lullaby,  
Till falls every failing sense  
Back to sleep's sheer impotence.

### IV

Or, a truant, home again,—  
With the moonlight through the pane,  
And the kiss that ends the prayer—  
Then the footsteps down the stair;

## THE BED

And the close hush; and far click  
Of the old clock; and the thick  
Sweetness of the locust-bloom  
Drugging all the enchanted room  
Into darkness fathoms deep  
As mine own pure childish sleep.

### V

Gift and spell, O Bed, retell  
Every lovely miracle—  
Up from childhood's simplest dream  
Unto manhood's pride supreme!—  
Sacredness no words express,—  
Lo, the young wife's fond caress  
Of her first-born, while beside  
Bends the husband, tearful-eyed,  
Marvelling of kiss and prayer  
Which of these is holier there.

### VI

Trace the vigils through the long,  
Long nights, when the cricket's song  
Stunned the sick man's fevered brain,  
As he tossed and moaned in pain

## THE BED

Piteous—till thou, O Bed,  
Smoothed the pillows for his head,  
And thy soothest solace laid  
Round him, and his fever weighed  
Into slumber deep and cool,  
And divinely merciful.

## VII

Thus, O Bed, all gratefully  
I would ever sing of thee—  
Till the final sleep shall fall  
O'er me, and the crickets call  
In the grasses where at last  
I am indolently cast  
Like a play-worn boy at will.—  
'Tis a Bed befriends me still—  
Yea, and Bed, belike, the best,  
Softest, safest, blessèdest.

## THE TRIBUTE OF HIS HOME

BENJAMIN HARRISON—INDIANAPOLIS, MARCH 14, 1901

BOWED, midst a universal grief that makes  
Columbia's self a stricken mourner, cast  
In tears beneath the old Flag at half-mast,  
A sense of glory rouses us and breaks  
Like song upon our sorrowing and shakes  
The dew from our drenched eyes, that smile at last  
In childish pride—as though the great man passed  
To his most high reward for our poor sakes.  
Loved of all men—we muse,—yet ours he was—  
Choice of the Nation's mighty brotherhood—  
Her soldier, statesman, ruler.—Ay, but then,  
We knew him—long before the world's applause  
And after—as a neighbor, kind and good,  
Our common friend and fellow-citizen.



## AT SEA

YEA, we go down to sea in ships—  
But Hope remains behind,  
And Love, with laughter on his lips,  
And Peace, of passive mind;  
While out across the deeps of night,  
With lifted sails of prayer,  
We voyage off in quest of light,  
Nor find it anywhere.

O Thou who wroughtest earth and sea,  
Yet keepest from our eyes  
The shores of an eternity  
In calms of Paradise,  
Blow back upon our foolish quest  
With all the driving rain  
Of blinding tears and wild unrest,  
And waft us home again!

## “THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS”

PAP he allus ust to say,

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

Liked to hear him thataway,

In his old split-bottomed cheer

By the fireplace here at night—

Wood all in,—and room all bright, .

Warm and snug, and folks all here:

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

Me and ’Lize, and Warr’n and Jess

And Eldory home fer two

Weeks’ vacation; and, I guess,

Old folks tickled through and through,

Same as *we* was,—“Home onc’t more

Fer another Chris’mus—shore!”

Pap ’ud say, and tilt his cheer,—

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

"THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS"

Mostly Pap was ap' to be  
Ser'ous in his "daily walk,"  
As he called it; giner'ly  
Was no hand to joke er talk.  
Fac's is, Pap had never be'n  
Rugged-like at all—and then  
Three years in the army had  
Hepped to break him purty bad.

Never *flinched*! but frost and snow  
Hurt his wownd in winter. But  
You bet *Mother* knowed it, though!—  
Watched his feet, and made him putt  
On his flannen; and his knee,  
Where it never healed up, he  
Claimed was "well now—mighty near—  
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"  
Pap 'ud say, and snap his eyes . . .  
Row o' apples sputter'n' here  
Round the hearth, and me and 'Lize  
Crackin' hicker'-nuts; and Warr'n  
And Eldory parchin' corn;  
And whole raft o' young folks here.  
"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

"THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS"

Mother tuk most comfort in

Jest a-heppin' Pap: She'd fill

His pipe fer him, er his tin

O' hard cider; er set still

And read fer him out the pile

O' newspapers putt on file

Whilse he was with Sherman—(She

Knowed the whole war-history!)

Sometimes he'd git het up some.—

"Boys," he'd say, "and you girls, too,  
Chris'mus is about to come;

So, as you've a right to do,  
*Celebrate* it! Lots has died,  
Same as Him they crucified,  
That you might be happy here.  
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Missed his voice last Chris'mus—missed

Them old cheery words, you know!

Mother helt up tel she kissed

All of us—then had to go

And break down! And I laughs: "Here!  
'Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!'"

"Them's his very words," sobbed she,

"When he asked to marry me."

“THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS”

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”—

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

Over, over, still I hear,

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”

Yit, like him, I’m goin’ to smile

And keep cheerful all the while:

*Allus* Chris’mus *There*—And here

“Chris’mus comes but onc’t a year!”















